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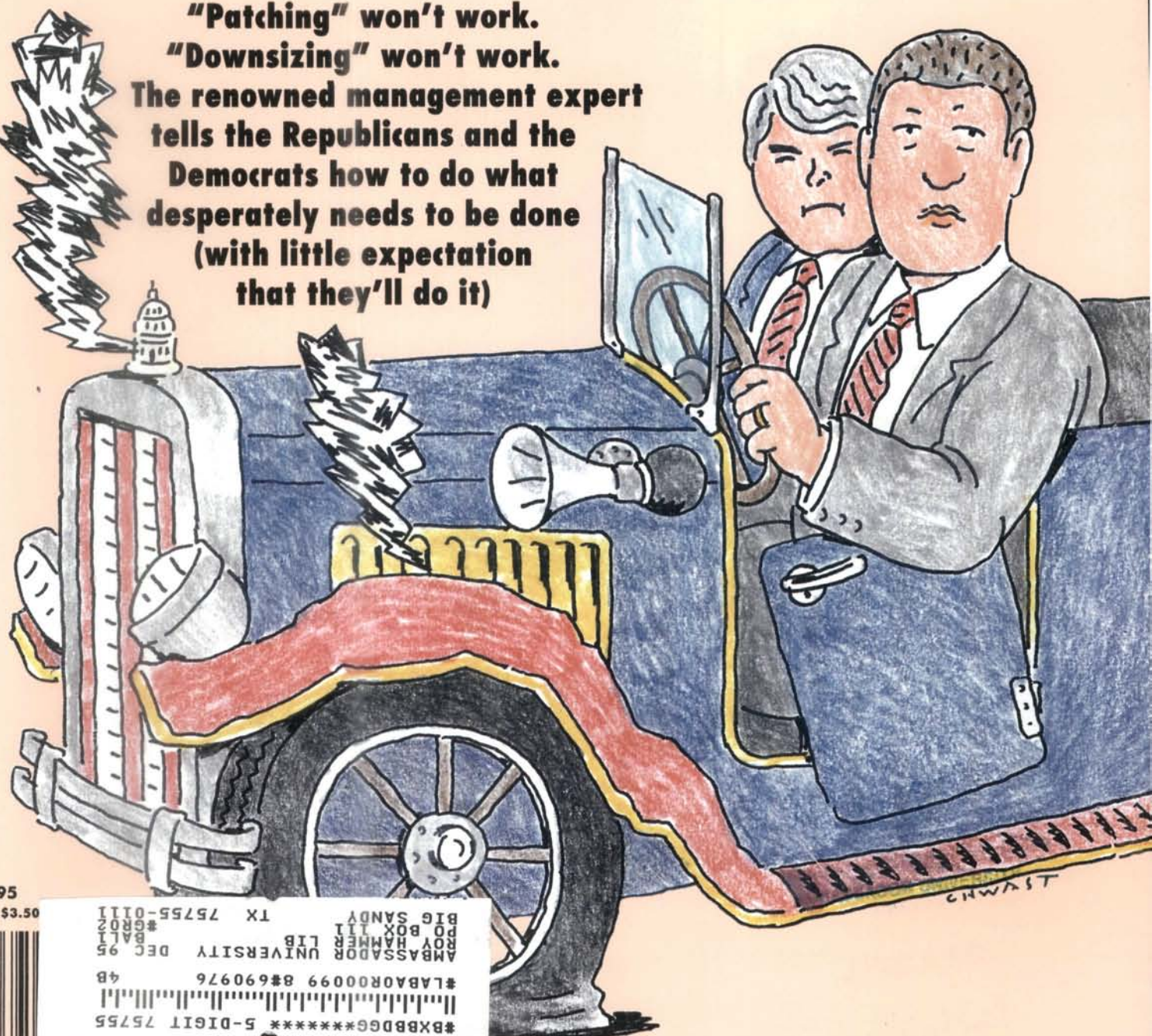
The Atlantic Monthly

FEBRUARY 1995

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BY PETER F. DRUCKER

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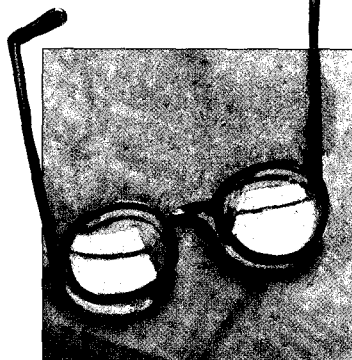
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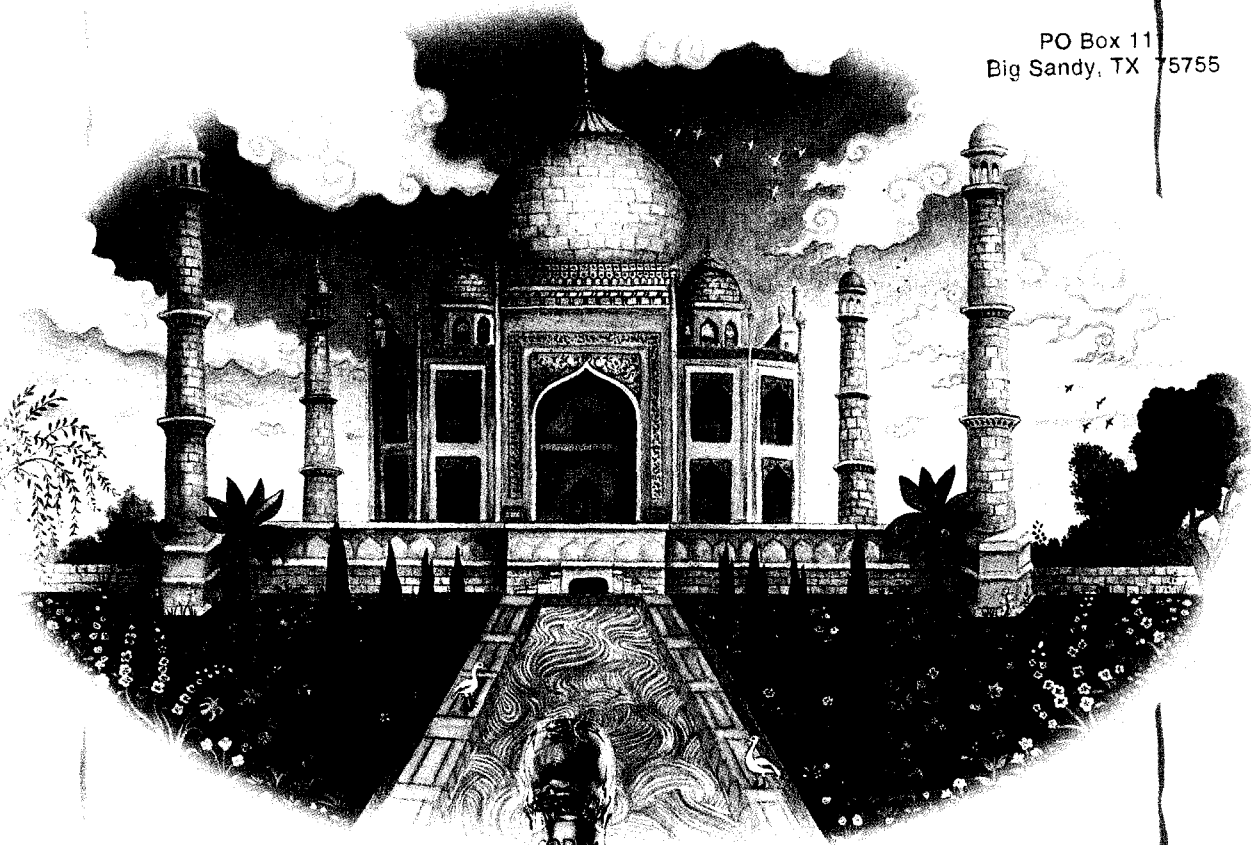


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THE earliest known maps are simple markings on clay tablets from around 3000 B.C. Then as now, maps allowed people to produce and record a kind of geographic narrative of place, ownership, or discovery. The range of stories that maps told did not, however, appreciably expand for nearly five millennia. The turning point came in the seventeenth century, when Europeans created the first of what are known as data maps—maps filled not only with place-names and geographic features but also with measured quantities, such as temperature and population. They still painted terrain, but painted it, one might say, with numbers.

It was *The Atlantic Monthly's* interest in telling geographic stories with demographic, sociological, and scientific themes that led us to introduce the feature At Last Count, in 1989. Most of the At Last Count maps start with the outlines of America's constituent counties, metropolitan areas, or television markets. Into those templates map makers pour thousands of pieces of data, giving readers insight into large regional themes and also into how their own locale compares with others.

From the time of the feature's inception, Rodger Doyle, a cartographer and freelance writer who lives in Buffalo, has been its most frequent contributor. Doyle, who spent many years working in advertising and marketing, developed an interest in

cartography in the mid-1980s, when mapping software became available for personal computers. Some of the maps he has produced for At Last Count, including ones on never-married adults, cancer, and working mothers, will appear in a new book he has compiled, the *Atlas of Contemporary America*, which was published last September by Facts On File. The book contains more than 180 maps dealing with issues of politics, economics, the environment, ethnic and religious diversity, health, and the law. Doyle is now at work on a second thematic atlas, tentatively called *The Book of Changes: The Transformation of American Life, 1650–1990*.

Another At Last Count contributor, Michael J. Weiss, has also produced a new demographic atlas—*Latitudes & Attitudes: An Atlas of American Tastes, Trends, Politics, and Passions*, which was published last October by Little, Brown. Weiss, a journalist and marketing consultant who lives in Washington, D.C., constructs his maps with survey data on attitudes and purchases—showing, for example, areas of the country with high proportions of death-penalty supporters, Twinkie buyers, and C-SPAN watchers.

At Last Count will continue to appear in the months ahead. And as you will see from the map in the current issue, we will be looking at places other than the United States. —THE EDITORS

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Seymour Chwast (cover art) is the director of the Pushpin Group. His work, in a variety of media, has been exhibited widely in the United States and Europe.

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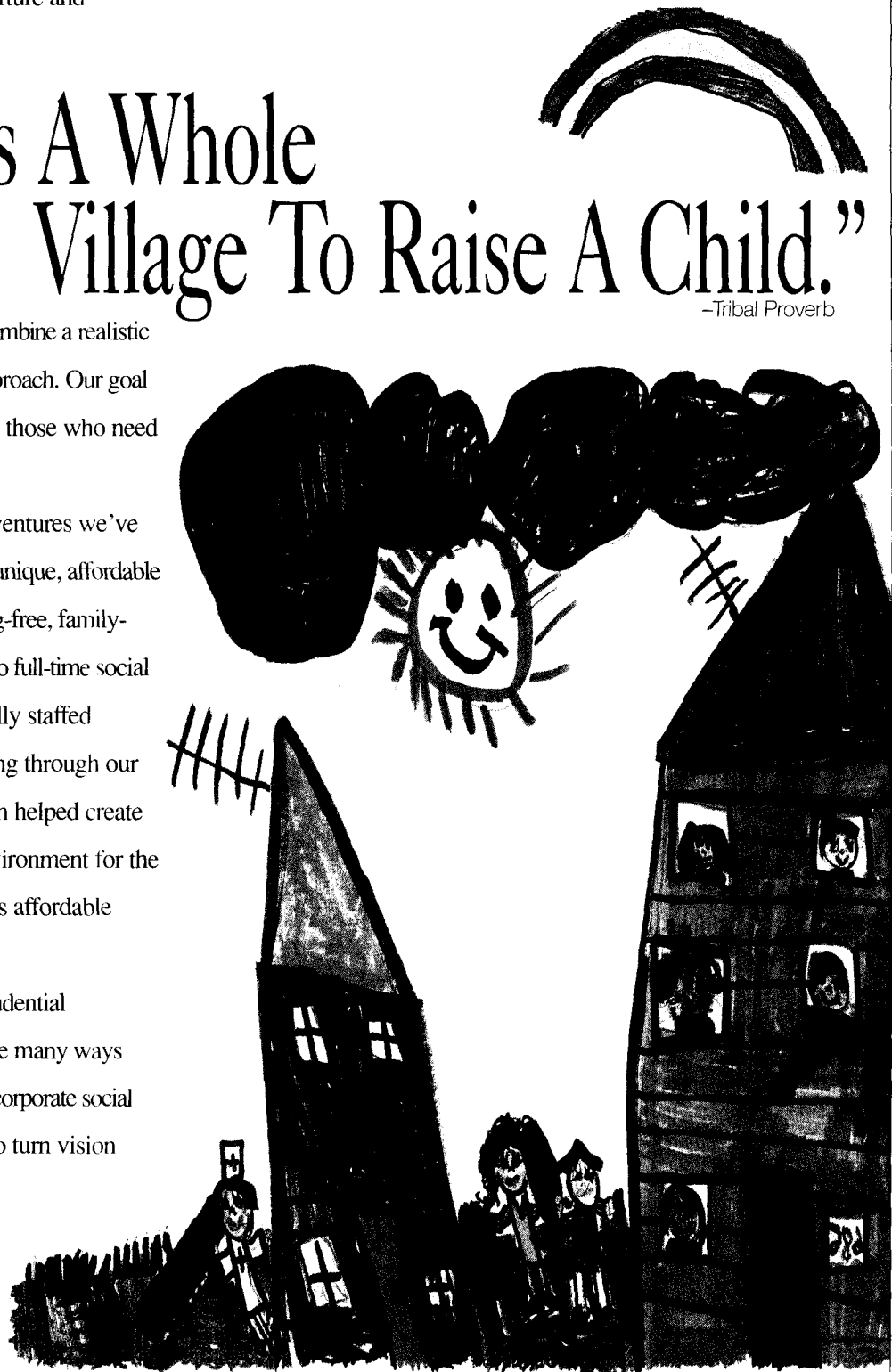
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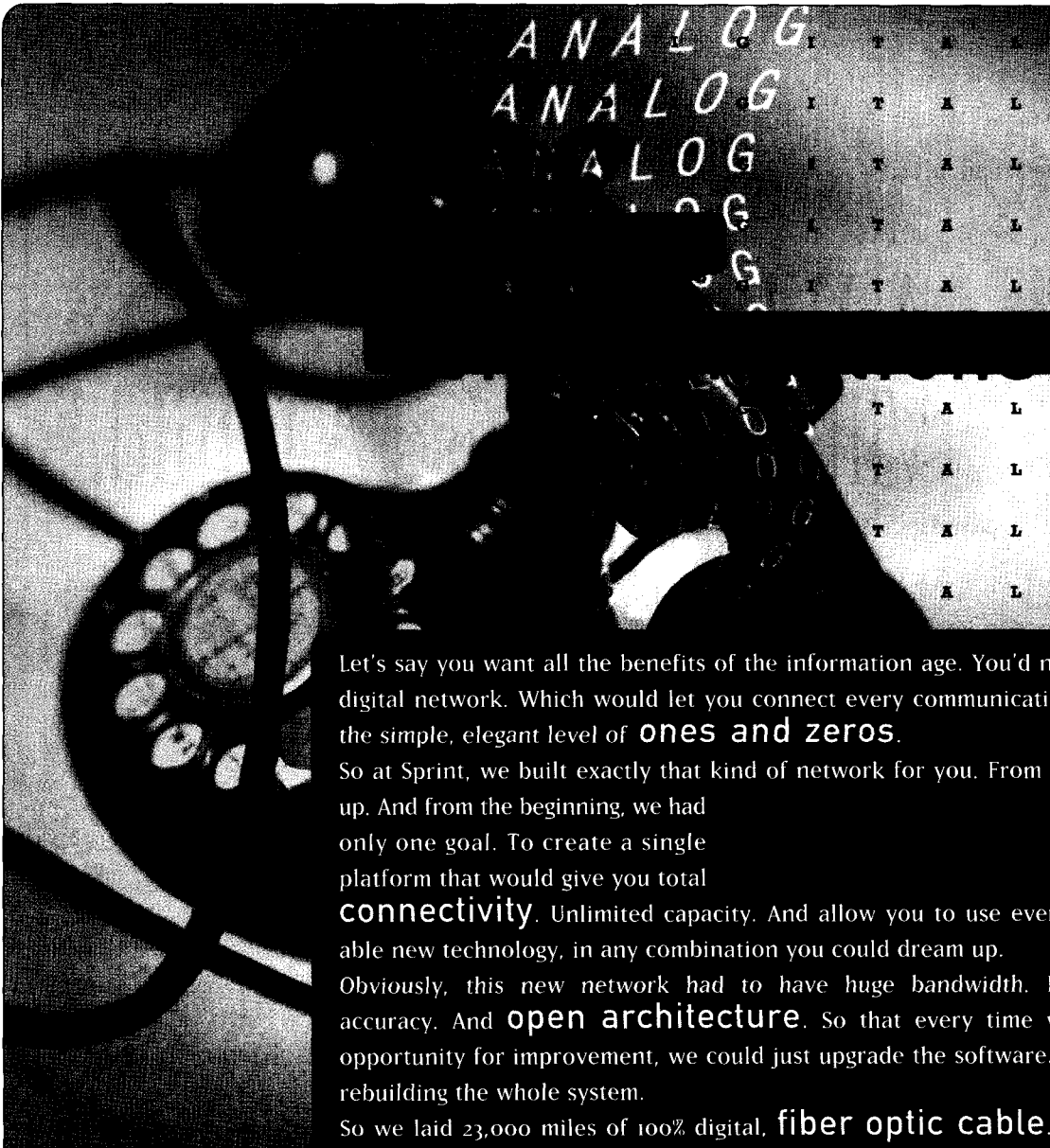
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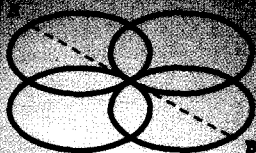
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LETTERS

Social Transformation

Although I enjoyed Peter F. Drucker's intriguing essay "The Age of Social Transformation" (November *Atlantic*), I was a bit surprised at his claim that government in modern democratic societies "has proved almost totally incompetent" at running social services, and that this task is better left to nonprofit organizations in the "social sector." To claim that the modern welfare state is incompetent implies that it has a well-defined set of goals and that it does not meet them. Neither implication is true. The modern welfare state consumes so much political attention precisely because it lacks both clear goals and the standards for determining whether or not its goals have been achieved.

If the goal of the welfare state is to keep the majority of the elderly, the handicapped, and the poor housed and fed, then the welfare state has been a remarkable success. But if its goal is to reduce the need for welfare, then, of course, it has been a failure, as Drucker implies. This raises the question of what creates the need for welfare. Even Drucker would have difficulty disputing the notion that the modern welfare state emerged as the sister institution of capitalism: without the freedom to lay off or displace workers (in order to upgrade technology or relocate), private industry would lose much of the flexibility needed to remain competitive. That freedom is heavily dependent on the modern welfare state to pick up the pieces, thereby preserving the legitimacy of the free-market system. And this legitimacy is something that needs to be factored into the "competitive-impact" statements Drucker proposes as a means for evaluating government policies.

To say that the nonprofit sector should begin taking over many of the functions of the modern welfare state (an increasingly popular view on the right) is like

asking David to start wearing Goliath's clothes. The volunteer spirit about which Drucker waxes so romantic depends not simply on a sense of civic responsibility but also on leisure time—something that has been sharply curtailed by economic changes in the past two decades. If more people are spending more time at work, fewer will have the time to help those less fortunate. Drucker's argument also ignores a fundamental principle of the welfare state—namely, that entitlements are rights of citizenship rather than the fruits of charity. Although appeals for the support of welfare legislation typically evoke humanitarian themes, the belief that we as Americans are entitled to the benefits we receive is quite firmly rooted. Try persuading a group of senior citizens that their Social Security checks should be financed by charitable contributions rather than payroll deductions, and you'll see what I mean.

Edward P. Freeland
Lawrenceville, N.J.

"The Age of Social Transformation," with its montages of illustrations, is apocalyptic in its attempt to convey a historically unprecedented change in national social conditions in the twentieth century, with emphasis on industrialized countries. The author is described on the front cover as "a farsighted social philosopher." Whether the reader considers this epithet warranted depends to a large extent upon the reader's political leanings.

I would have thought that an essay on social transformation in the twentieth century would at least discuss the change in the United States from an ethnically segregated society to an integrated society; the emergence of democracies in the United States and Europe (one could hardly call societies that denied women the vote democratic—and we had in the United States a large ethnic group that was also denied voting rights); the emergence of communism and socialism; the enormous change in social behaviors,

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particularly the acceptance and tolerance of premarital sex. But nary a word on any of these social transformations. Peter Drucker's essay concentrated on a rather silly notion about "the rise and fall of the blue-collar worker." This was followed by much rambling about a successor to the blue-collar worker who was given an even sillier epithet—the "knowledge worker."

A blue-collar worker has traditionally been perceived as a worker who "soils his hands"; workers who do clerical or administrative work are white-collar workers. The latter group also included "professionals." This concept is still prevalent today: real-estate and insurance agents claim to be professional, whereas auto mechanics and plumbers are less likely to be accorded this honorable title. In the classification of employment, "white collar" describes those occupations in which a graduate level of training and education is required, and "blue collar" describes those occupations that require not a high level of education but rather a degree of manual skill and knowledge obtained from apprenticeships and trade schools. If the affluent professional has problems with his car, he calls a blue-collar worker to fix it, because the average professional does not know how a car works; the same is true if his microwave oven fails, or his telephone, or his VCR, or his television, or if his roof leaks. In general, today's professional is somewhat useless in any area other than his chosen field.

However, Drucker chooses to classify blue-collar workers as machine operators and brands them uneducated and unskilled. This is the basis for the denouement of his rise-and-fall notion.

Drucker states, "The extreme social transformations of this century have caused hardly any stir." This is indeed a revelation. I remember those hunger marches of the thirties in Britain and the general strike that brought the country to a standstill. I remember the riots in major U.S. cities in the sixties, and I remember the civil-rights marches. I remember constitutional crises that caused the creation of the Fourth and Fifth republics in France. My history books told me of the Communist revolution in Russia, and I remember the transformation of monarchies to republics in the Balkan countries. All these events caused great social

changes, yet Drucker says they did not cause a stir. Well, they certainly stirred me.

Norman F. Bates
Dana Point, Calif.

Peter Drucker asserts that the megastate has not delivered on a single one of its promises. This should be news to people who defeated the Axis powers in the Second World War, who drive on the Eisenhower system of highways, who do not live in fear of several dread diseases, who can eat, drink, and sleep in places that would still bar them if it were not for the megastate. The need for all the efforts to slow and reverse environmental problems may be debated. But does Drucker think that everything would be better if the state had allowed vehicles and businesses to continue down the road they were taking in the first six decades of this century?

Edmond C. Smith
Richlands, Va.

Having proclaimed that "knowledge workers" must be specialists and that "'generalists' . . . are coming to be seen as dilettantes," Peter Drucker illustrates the point by supporting his generalizations with numerous statements that a specialist in American social history would find questionable. This inattention to national differences and historical specificity bolsters a sermon designed to persuade readers that they and all the institutions on which they depend are gripped by convulsive transformations that only managers can master.

Drucker often overstates the pace of social change. In the United States, for instance, infant mortality did not drop "immediately when farmers and domestic servants moved into industrial work." In 1920 infant mortality was still 13 percent higher in American cities of more than 10,000 people than in small towns and rural areas. Urban death rates declined only gradually. Nor did domestic servants "vastly" outnumber blue-collar industrial workers. By 1900 domestic servants made up only five or six percent of the American labor force, a proportion well below that of several other employment categories. So the domestics' decline in numbers since then, though real, is less dramatic than Drucker would have it.

Drucker's account of the sudden rise

and fall of industrial labor is an odd mixture of exaggerated specificity and sweeping generalizations. "Industrial workers . . . until 1913 . . . worked long hours." Why 1913? What changed so abruptly? "Whereas industrial workers who make or move things had accounted for two fifths of the American work force in the 1950s," according to Drucker, "they accounted for less than one fifth in the early 1990s—that is, for no more than they had accounted for in 1900, when their meteoric rise began." It is uncertain just which workers Drucker has in mind, but total employment in the manufacturing, construction, and transportation and public-utility sectors showed much less fluctuation: 34.7 percent of the labor force in 1900, 35.6 percent in 1950, and 31.4 percent in 1990. Manufacturing alone went from 21.8 percent in 1900 to 25 percent in 1950 and 18 percent in 1990. Admittedly, these statistics obscure the shift toward white-collar employment in industry, but production workers still accounted for 64 percent of manufacturing jobs in 1991. The claim that unions in the 1950s were "the country's most powerful and best organized *political* force" overstates the steepness of their decline. If unions were so powerful then, why could they not win repeal or even favorable modification of the Taft-Hartley Act?

Especially puzzling is Drucker's claim that in the past half century three fifths of America's blacks achieved middle-class incomes (up from one twentieth). Since the Census Bureau reported that 33.5 percent of American blacks were living in poverty in 1970 and 30.7 percent in 1989, apparently Drucker regards nearly everyone living even slightly above the poverty line as middle-class. Since the median black family income was 61.3 percent of the white in 1970, and 56.2 percent in 1989, if three fifths of blacks were middle-class, at least four fifths of whites must have been. Yet if nearly everyone is middle-class, the term is meaningless.

David Macleod
Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

Peter F. Drucker replies:

Edward P. Freeland's main point is that nonprofit institutions cannot take over social and community tasks. Unfortunately, the assumptions on which Mr. Freeland bases his assertion are wrong. The people

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The Atlantic Monthly Puzzler contest—heretofore a monthly affair—is now a once-a-year event, with a greater reward for the winner. In the April issue Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon will introduce this year's contest puzzle—designed to challenge even the fans who have solved the pair's past offerings. The prize is a \$150 gift certificate to Zingerman's, the gourmet-food mail-order house frequently mentioned in Corby Kummer's food columns as a source for high-quality ingredients. So whet your appetite along with your pencil.

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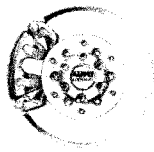
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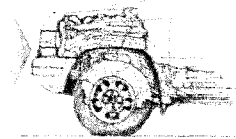
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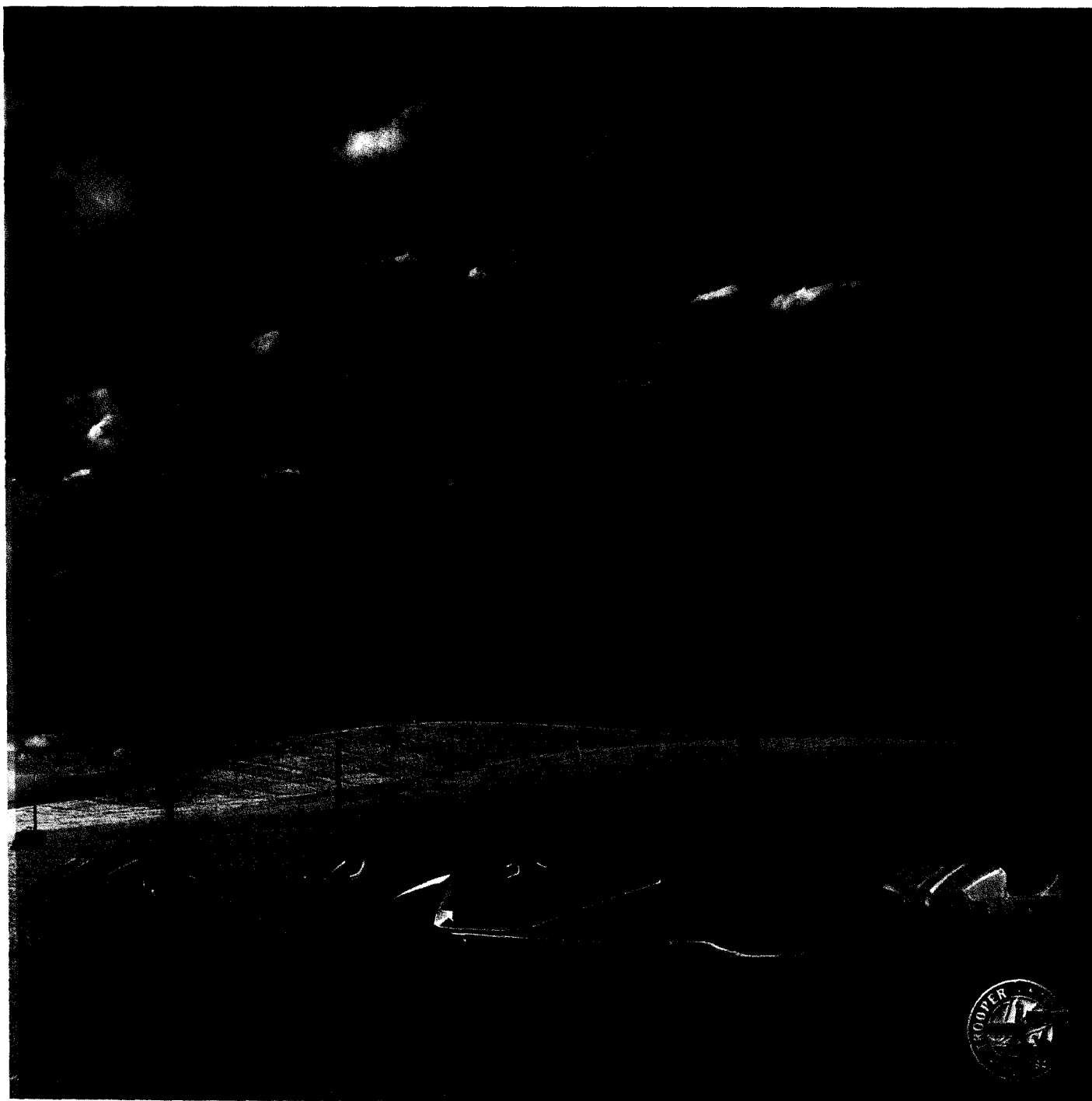
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who now give the most time to volunteer activities in the social sector are precisely the people who have the least leisure: two-earner professional families. Altogether, every other American adult (once out of school) now spends three to five hours a week as a volunteer in a nonprofit institution.

Mr. Freeland's second factual error is that financing social-sector nonprofit institutions is a matter of "charity." Some of it is, of course. And as I have been arguing for many years, we need to raise the amount donated to charity by the American public from the roughly 2.5 percent of GNP that it has been for years to five percent over the next decade in order to satisfy the demands that the retreat of government from social and community jobs will make on the nonprofit institutions of the social sector. Forty years of work with nonprofits of all kinds allow me to assure Mr. Freeland that this is a realistic goal.

Norman F. Bates and Edmond C. Smith complain that I have not written a complete history of the twentieth century. They are quite right—I haven't, and I did not intend to. Most of the things they include as events worth discussing had their roots in earlier centuries. My piece is about the *one* development that is unprecedented and unique to this century. Always before in human history, and in every country, the vast majority made their living by manual work and by the sweat of their brows. Now the great majority—around 75 percent in the United States—are not manual laborers. This is also the first century in which formal, school-acquired knowledge, rather than land, labor, or capital, has become the key resource of production. Messrs. Bates and Smith may not agree that these changes are the most important events of this century. But I think they will agree that they are unprecedented, and that they distinguish this century from all earlier ones.

David Macleod states that in 1920 infant mortality was still 13 percent higher in U.S. cities than in small towns and rural areas. He is absolutely right—but the two aspects of the phenomenon have nothing to do with each other, as we have known for well over a hundred years.

No, U.S. domestic servants did not account for five or six percent of the work force, as Mr. Macleod states. They accounted in the early years of the century

for 15 to 20 percent. Mr. Macleod omits live-in servants on the farm. But except in England, rural domestic servants everywhere outnumbered urban domestic servants. In the United States (if one counts only people who lived with the farmer and had to be fed by him—that is, when one excludes sharecroppers) they ran in the early years of the century to between a quarter and a third of the agricultural population, which was as high as 40 percent of the total population, and that number has to be added to Mr. Macleod's five or six percent.

Mr. Macleod asks, why 1913? Well, it was the last peacetime year in Europe—and my article deals with the developed countries altogether, not just the United States. By 1914 governments, under increasing labor pressure, had begun to regulate working hours, and the eight-hour day had become standard in all industrialized countries (excepting only Japan) by 1920.

Regarding the proportion of manual workers, Mr. Macleod confuses where people work with what people do. In the 1950s manual workers constituted close to 50 percent of the working population in the United States—23 percent in manufacturing, four percent in mining and transportation, and 12 percent still on the farm. By 1993 workers who made and moved things—that is, manual workers—were down to approximately 32 million, or 25 percent of the labor force. Of that 25 percent, three quarters—17 percent of the total—were blue-collar workers in manufacturing; roughly four to five percent of the total were in mining and transportation, and less than three percent were on the farm. And for each 1,000 people in the population the United States from 1980 to 1990 created almost fifty new professional, technical, administrative, and managerial jobs (that is, "knowledge jobs") and around thirty clerical, sales, and services jobs. In the same decade it abolished close to twenty manual jobs, in production, in transportation, and as laborers, for each 1,000 of population.

As to middle-class incomes for blacks, one accepted definition of middle-class income is indeed income above the poverty line. That is one commonly (though unofficially) used by government agencies. I myself much prefer the definition that market researchers commonly use:

income above 125 percent of poverty. The best income years for blacks were the late 1970s. As I pointed out in my piece, blacks since then have been hit disproportionately hard by the shrinking of jobs that pay middle-class incomes to people without much skill or much schooling—that is, to manufacturing workers. In 1978 some 31 percent of U.S. blacks had incomes below the poverty line, and around 36 percent had incomes below 125 percent of the poverty line. In 1940 all but a handful of American blacks had incomes below what would then have been considered the poverty line, and practically none had incomes above the 125 percent figure. If the poverty line is considered the bottom of lower-middle-class income, then the years after the Second World War saw the median black income rise from \$6,000 (in 1993 dollars) below the middle-class dividing line to more than \$7,000 above it. If the 125 percent figure is used, then the median black income rose from about \$10,000 below the middle-class dividing line to \$3,000 above it. In either case this means that in the 1940s most blacks earned incomes considerably below those of the middle class; since the 1970s more than half have earned incomes equal to or better than those of the middle class. There is nothing else in social history that equals this development. That it's not nearly good enough is something else. My point was, after all, not how well-off blacks are. On the contrary, my point was that they have been disproportionately hurt by the loss of jobs for blue-collar manufacturing workers—psychologically even more than economically. By the way, I do not speak of the "middle class," but point out that a large proportion of American blacks advanced into middle-class incomes but not into middle-class jobs.

Advice & Consent

Cullen Murphy's "The Power of Two" (November *Atlantic*) overlooks a loophole in Stigler's Law, which states that discoveries are named not after the first person to discover them but after the last.

Discoverers are obliged by the rules of the game to search the relevant literature to determine if they have been anticipated. Thus the botanists De Vries, Correns, and Tschermak, who independently dis-

covered a statistical law of heritability in 1900, were obliged to name that law after Gregor Mendel, who had published a previously neglected paper on the subject in 1866. If Cullen Murphy had done a similar search, he would have discovered that Robert Benchley anticipated his General Theory of Divisibility more than sixty years ago, when he wrote, "People can be divided into two groups: those who divide things into two groups and those who do not." I fear that what we must still call Murphy's Law has triumphed again.

J. Quinn Brisben
Chicago, Ill.

That indefinite but very real process that takes boys from adolescence to adulthood is missing from our society. The formal rites of initiation practiced by tribal groups, the careful mentoring of fathers, uncles, and other men, has faded from view. So we are left with Steven Stark's landscape of boyhood mores and humor ("Where the Boys Are," September *Atlantic*).

Entering adulthood has always required a societal effort. Left to accomplish this on our own, we have shied from its difficulty, and been beguiled by the siren song of naiveté and irresponsibility. Adolescence now extends into our twenties and thirties, as we halfheartedly seek a way out of boyhood. Society has stalled in adolescence: we aren't returning to junior high; we simply never left.

Clarke Green
Kennett Square, Pa.

Regarding Steven Wardell's article "Capsule Cure" (October *Atlantic*): Sleeping quarters similar to the tiny rooms of Tokyo's Green Plaza Capsule Hotel can be found in the United States. I suggest traveling overnight in a single slumber-coach room on Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited*, *Cardinal*, *Crescent*, *Broadway Limited*, or some Florida trains. In a room similar to a Tokyo capsule the railroad has provided a bed, toilet, sink, window, and luggage space, but no television or operating temperature controls. Surely this will cure the desire in even the most curious adventurer to experience iron-lung-sized accommodations in faraway Tokyo.

Paul P. Kroeger
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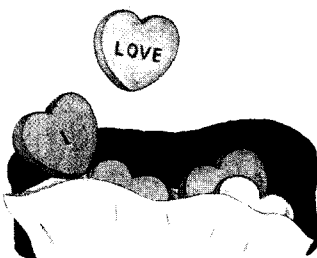
Arts & Letters

For almost a decade February has been Afro-American (or Black History) Month, a showcase for African-American achievements, but an increasing number of artists and intellectuals are sitting it out, on the grounds that relegating African-American accomplishments to a single month amounts to tokenism and "ghettoization." Though these criticisms are not new, they are gathering force, with corporations as well as individual performers bowing out of the month's observances. This February, for example, Arista Records will forgo its usual Afro-American Month promotions in favor of broader, ongoing outreach programs; Home Box Office and Pepsi-Cola took similar actions last year. Supporters of the observance argue, often with regret, that a formal means for promoting awareness remains necessary nonetheless.



Demographics

Some comfort can be found amid this month's winter gloom: Americans are less likely to fall victim to homicide in February (which averages just over 7 percent of the murders that occur each year) than in any other month. Assaults, thefts, and burglaries are also typically at annual lows. Weather is one often-cited explanation: not only are fewer people out on the streets, but homes are apt to be secured against the elements and, in the process, against intruders. A less obvious theory: the dip in homicides may relate to decreased exposure to outdoor environmental toxins—especially manganese, which is found in vehicle exhaust emissions and has been linked to violent behavior in prisoners.



Food

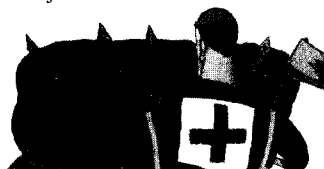
February 14, the millions of schoolchildren who exchange candy "conversation" hearts as Valentines will get an unscheduled lesson in multiculturalism: in circulation this year are not only hearts conveying staple messages such as KISS ME and BE MINE but also ones stamped with the word "love" in one of 25 languages, including Arabic, Finnish, Hungarian, Swahili, and Bahasa Malaysia. The multilingual hearts, which are manufactured by the Stark company, represent the latest effort of confectionary firms to stay abreast of an increasingly politically correct, and on occasion exceedingly puritanical, market—sometimes a tricky business. Stark added a line of Spanish-language hearts in 1977. The New England Confectionary Company (Necco) dropped its decades-old I'M GAY several years later, because of the sexual connotation the statement had acquired; Necco has also abandoned OH BOY and FOXY LADY, because of consumer complaints.

Environment

This month, in response to a sweeping 1994 executive order, more than a dozen federal agencies, from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Department of Commerce, must make final their plans to combat what the Clinton Administration has called "environmental injustice" and activists have called "environmental racism" and "radioactive colonial-

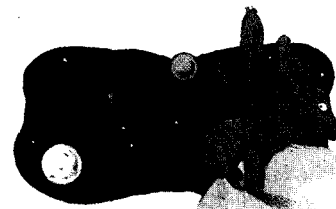


ism": the disproportionate location of environmentally harmful facilities in low-income and minority communities. According to one study, people of color are nearly 50 percent more likely than whites to live near a commercial toxic-waste facility. The agencies' plans will probably include community grants, regulatory programs, and data-collection initiatives. Whether any of these will make a dramatic difference remains to be seen: to some strapped communities, including some Indian reservations, waste disposal has become a lucrative source of revenue and jobs.



Health & Safety

February 9, new safety standards for loggers across the country take effect today; they are the first significant federal action in 25 years to bolster safe practices in logging, which has persistently had one of the highest rates of injury of any industry: as many as one in five loggers is injured, and one in 500 killed, each year. The new legislation, enacted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, requires loggers to wear protective equipment (and to inspect it before each shift), to be trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and to complete a series of rigorous safety checks before beginning to cut down trees. In addition, all new chain saws must be equipped with "chain brakes," which stop the chain from turning in the event of an accident. The construction industry, which has been plagued by a dismal safety record as well, must also comply with new OSHA regulations this month, in its case in an effort to reduce injuries from falls.



The Skies

February 2, Saturn lies beneath the new crescent Moon, low in the southwest at sunset. 11, Mars makes its closest approach to Earth, and reaches opposition: it lies on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun, and therefore is visible all night long, rising around sunset and setting near dawn. 15, Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunger, Snow, or Frightened Coyote Moon.

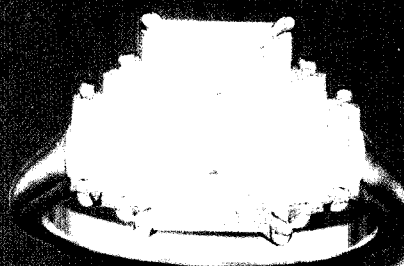
125 Years Ago

Charles Dawson Shanly, writing in the February, 1870, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The peculiar cry of the New York milkman is the first that breaks the stillness of early morning. It has long been a puzzle . . . how this fiendish yell originated, and why that most innocuous and pacifying of marketables . . . should be announced with a war-whoop to which that of the blanketed Arapahoe of the plains is but as the bleat of a spring lamb. The rural visitor who hears it for the first time in the rosy morn plunges out from his bedclothes and rushes to the window, expectant of one of those sanguinary hand-to-hand conflicts about which he has been so long reading in the New York papers. Instead of gore he sees milk; a long-handled ladle instead of a knife or pistol; and a taciturn man in rusty garments doling out that fluid with it to the sleepy-eyed Hēbē who clambers up from the basement with her jug, instead of scalping her of her chignon and adding it to the trophies at his belt."



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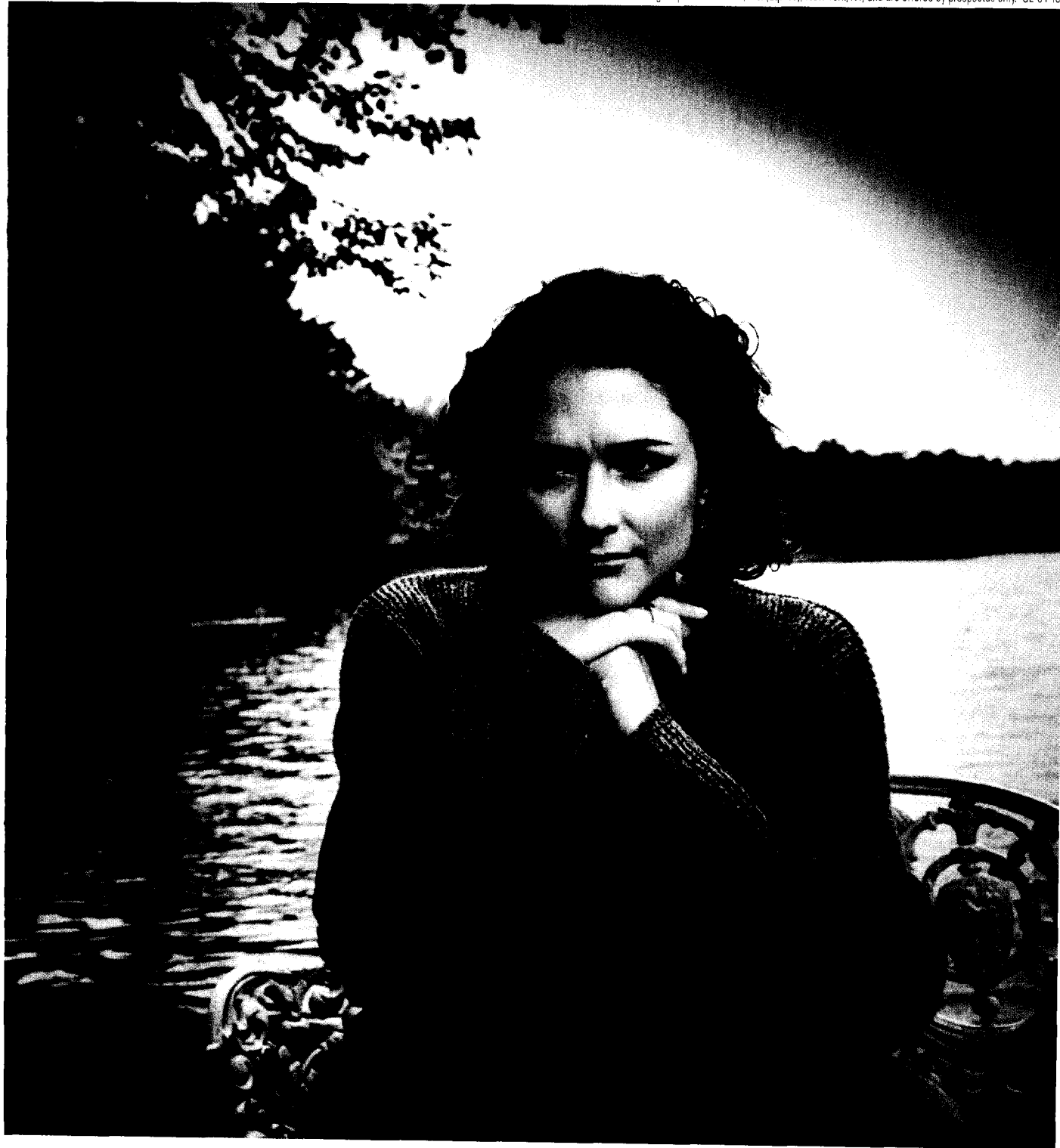
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Empowering Species

The best way to save endangered species may be to help them pay their own way

MANY of the battles to come, as a Democratic Administration faces a Republican Congress, will be the sort of meanspirited partisan scuffles that Americans love to deride. But sometimes the smoke and dust of the fray will conceal a matter of principle, even philosophy—as in the case of the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

Like many laws, the act must periodically be reauthorized, which is to say that the federal government must occasionally renew its own authority to fund the act's enforcement and administration. Reauthorization was scheduled for 1992, but Congress postponed action indefinitely—its members did not want to touch the issue in an election year. In the meantime, frustration with the law has been building. The inevitable debate will probably take place this year, perhaps within the next few months. It will be bloody, as they say inside the Beltway. At issue will be the nation's biological heritage, more or less, and a vision of its economic future. Conflict will be engaged by the usual operatives: lobbyists representing some of the nation's most powerful interest groups.

Opponents call for narrowing the scope of the law, claiming that society is spending billions to protect the Penland beard-tongue, the fat pocketbook mussel, the giant kangaroo rat, and a cavalcade of other creatures with absurd-sounding names. The Endangered Species Act, in their view, threatens to usurp so much private property and capsize so many jobs that it may wreck our very economy. Proponents declare the law inadequately enforced and demand that its protections be extended to more species at a faster rate; otherwise, they claim, we risk trashing our biological life-support system. Weaken or fortify?—that is the tenor of the de-

bate. One question is rarely addressed: Can the law be more responsive to the concerns of both sides?

■ ■ ■

The Endangered Species Act orders the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a branch of the Department of the Interior, to protect species recognized as endangered, without regard to cost. The

goal is to banish extinction from the United

States. Unfortunately, the present system has failed utterly to do

this. Species are going extinct anyway, and

the threats are multiplying. For every

species that Fish and Wildlife has

successfully removed from the

endangered list in the past two decades,

it has added more than one hundred others.

This outcome would have surprised the members of Congress who

passed the law, in 1973. Implicit in the debate over

the act was the assumption, still held by many conservationists today, that endangered species could be saved without sacrifice: if development affects a species here, we can just move the development or the species someplace else. Since then it has become clear that the reasons species become endangered are not always trivial, and that saving them is not so simple.

Anyone who has walked in the western parts of Albany, New York, can see the problem. A hundred years ago the area hosted

one of the world's largest populations of

the Karner Blue butterfly, a lovely little bug that appeared on the endangered list

at the end of 1992. The former haunts of the

butterfly have been taken over by an interstate highway, a power substation, a campus of the State University of New York, and several hundred middle-class homes. In other words, the butterfly was endangered by the satisfaction of ordinary human desires to drive around, switch on lamps at night, learn about interesting things, and live in a nice home.

**by Charles C. Mann and
Mark L. Plummer**



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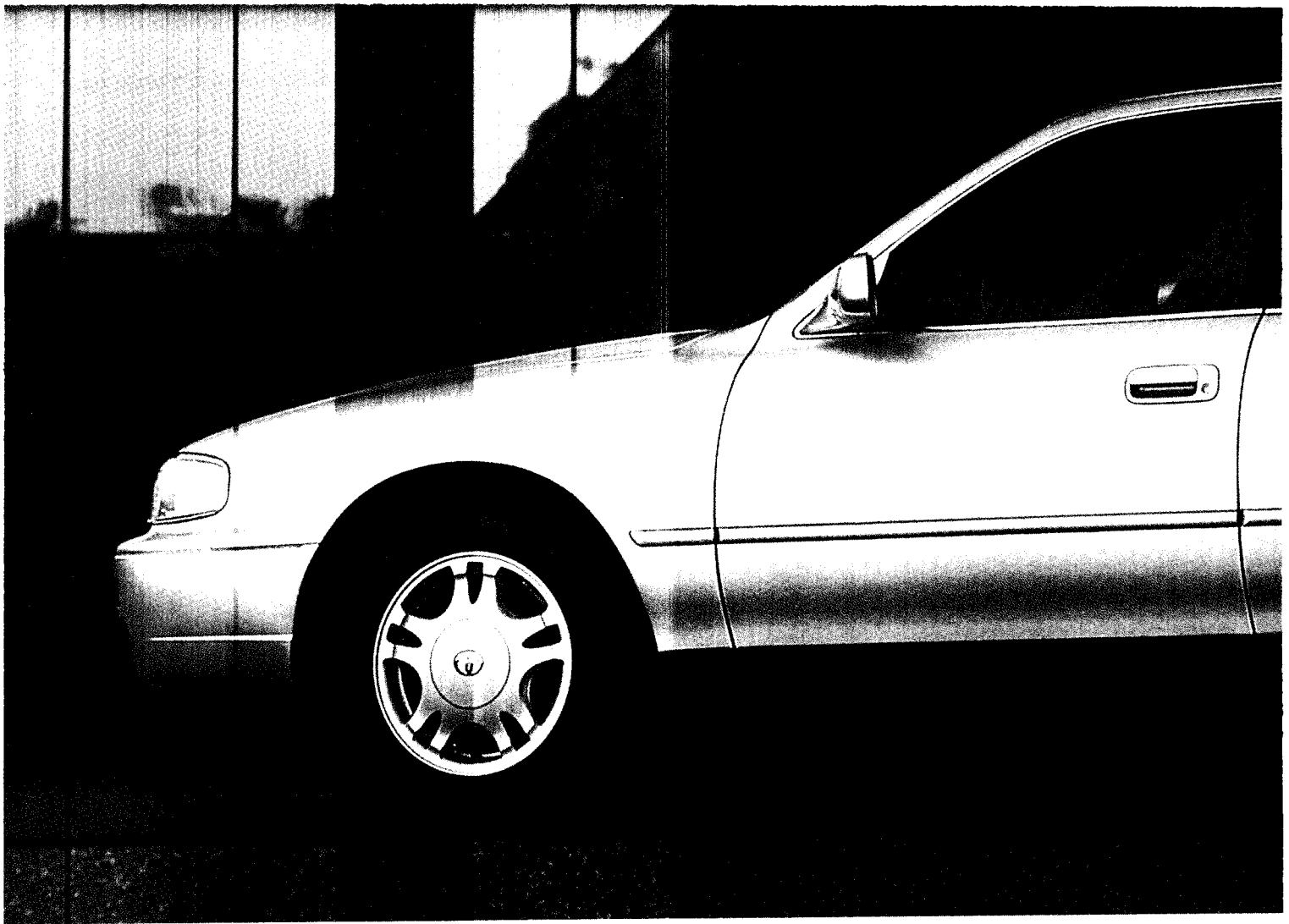
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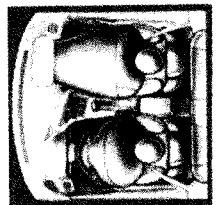


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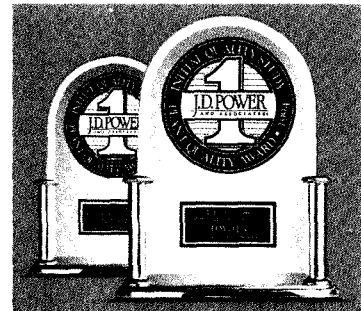


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Because human interests cannot be ignored, not all species can be saved. Yet the current system demands the unattainable: all species must be saved, and human interests must be ignored. Amplifying this dissonance has been an unwillingness in Congress to award the Fish and Wildlife Service more than a paltry budget to enforce and administer the law. As a result, the agency has been driven to impose conservation tasks on those private-property owners who are unlucky enough to have land that sustains endangered species. To be safe from possible prosecution, they must verify that using their property will cause the creatures no harm. Endangered species thus become a liability that encourages otherwise responsible citizens to call in the bulldozers at the first glimpse of an endangered bird or lizard.

Both sides of the debate recognize these flaws, but they disagree on how to remedy them. Supporters of the law cling to its impossible goal, calling for increased budgets and stricter enforcement. This would turn Fish and Wildlife Service biologists into ecological mandarins, making choices for entire regions which must favor the interests of other species and not people. Such overbearing regulation would increase the incentives for landowners to destroy pristine land, with predictably disastrous environmental consequences.

Not that opponents have a better answer. Many call for compensating landowners for any decrease in the value of their property brought on by species protection. But this amounts to little more than replacing ecological mandarins with economic mandarins, whose decisions would be equally predictable and equally disastrous.

■ ■ ■

What will it take to do a better job of saving our natural heritage? The foremost change must be to recognize that our values are manifold. If we valued only trees and streams, we wouldn't hesitate to save them, no matter what the cost. If we wanted only cement and steel, any part of nature beyond the minimum necessary to sustain life would become expendable. If the past is any guide, the debaters in Washington will blindly favor one side or the other. Progress will be possible only if the unrealistic demands of the Endangered Species Act are scaled back and supplemented with a way of satisfying some of the needs of affected landowners.

The demands of the current law should not be eliminated entirely, though. Even if a species fails a strict cost-benefit test, few people would support its extinction without pausing to reflect. Protecting species is a task that deserves a place in the political life of our country, alongside other basic values such as protecting health, maintaining the nation's defense, and fostering education.

In other words, a balance must be struck. Part of that balance should be for landowners to concede that our ecological inheritance is important enough to justify some regulation of their land. Another, equally important part of the balance should be for conservationists to concede that development plans that threaten species are reflections of the human desire to have stores, roads, schools, homes, and the like. The two concessions point in the

same direction: neither species nor developers should win all the time. The question is when and where each should prevail.

Moneyed interests, of course, will always threaten species and other environmental assets that cannot pay their way. The most appropriate counterweight is not to outlaw human nature but to award some money to environmental protection. Merely throwing money at the current system, however, will only exacerbate the problems inherent in the Endangered Species Act.

One solution would be to create an Endangered Species Trust Fund, to promote conservation in ways more compatible with American values and culture. The fund could underwrite a variety of programs, from ecological research to educational advertising to conservation assistance to outright land purchase. It could encourage landowners to share their land with species in trouble. The state of Wisconsin, for example, already has such a program, which covers seven species on the federal endangered list. Landowners agree to a nonbinding protection plan, and are rewarded with a picture of the species, a certificate of appreciation, ongoing species-management help, and, most important, the belief that they are voluntarily doing the right thing. According to the state, most landowners happily go along, although the program is unlikely to deter big development plans.

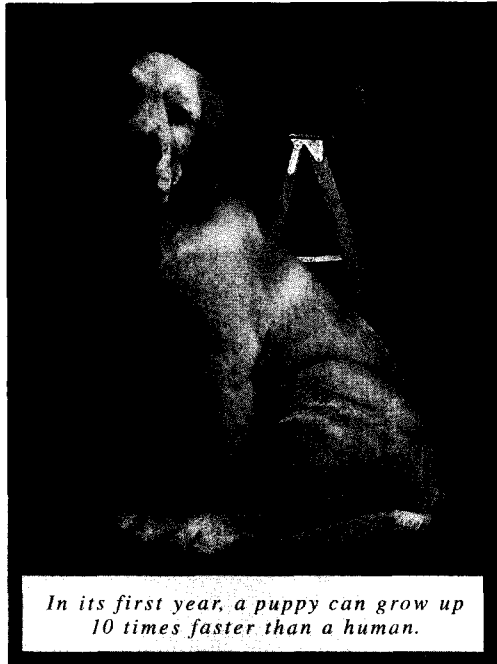
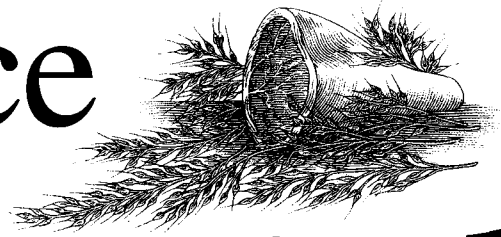
Not all species can be protected by voluntary programs, of course, and where necessary the trust fund could help subsidize conservation efforts by landowners. One possible model is a program sponsored by the Defenders of Wildlife, a Washington-based conservation group, which offers a \$5,000 "bounty" to each landowner who has an established wolf den on his or her property. The trust could also promote commercial practices that are environmentally friendlier but costlier than current practices. As the Soil Conservation Service does for farmers and soil conservation, a Biological Conservation Service, funded by the trust, could encourage foresters, ranchers, and miners to modify their activities, thus reducing—though not eliminating—harm to endangered species.

In critical cases the trust fund would have the tools to restrict land use greatly, albeit in a noncoercive manner. It could take a lesson from The Nature Conservancy, which protects some biologically valuable land by paying for a conservation easement—a legal contract that forbids developing a piece of property but allows the landowner to earn income through ecologically benign activities, such as certain types of agriculture. As a final resort, in places where almost any human activity threatens the other inhabitants, the trust fund could buy land and protect it as a biological preserve.

Such an effort would be expensive, but it could go a long way toward removing our natural heritage from the mire of partisan bickering. Indeed, the idea of a trust fund has quietly attracted interest from environmental organizations and from advocates of property rights. Combined with a scaled-back Endangered Species Act, the fund could help the nation provide environmental protection with less social conflict. Isn't that what it means to make the law responsive to the people and the causes it serves? ☘

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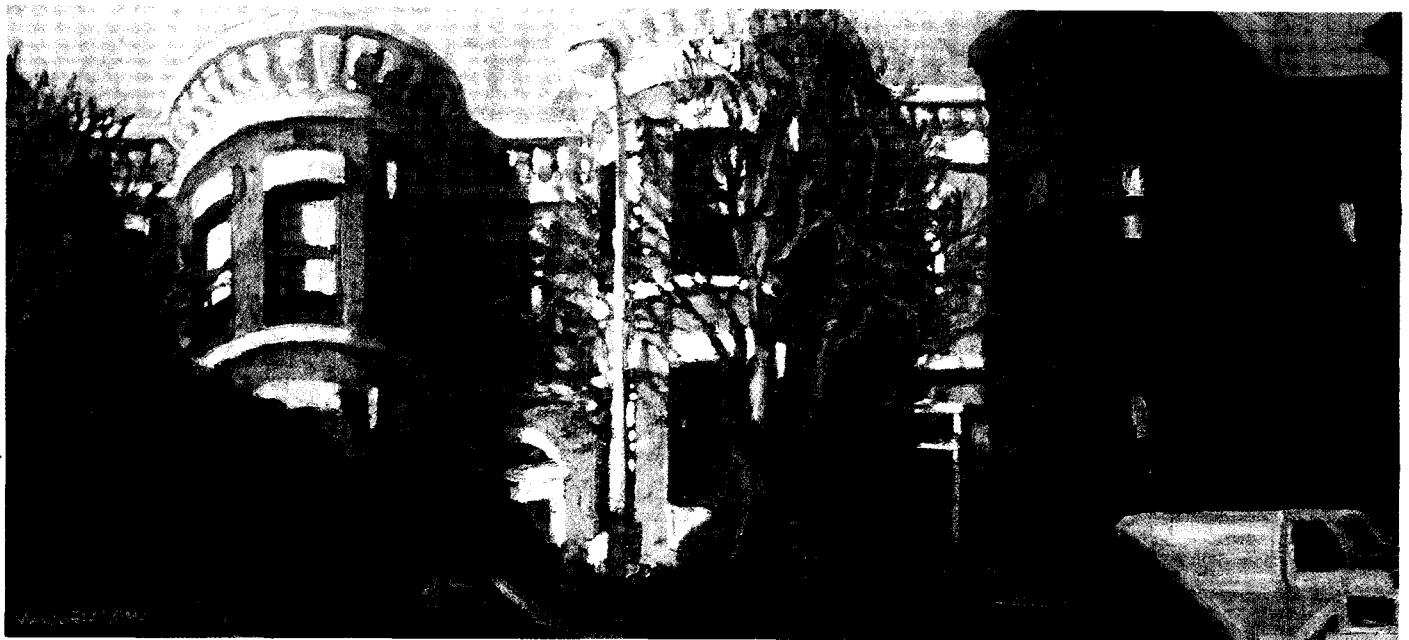
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Street Scene

Minor heroism in a major metropolitan area

ON a Saturday morning I left my Brooklyn apartment to shop for a dinner party and saw a crowd—baseball caps, legs straddling bicycles, an arm holding a lamp stand with a dangling price tag—around a person on the sidewalk. I was almost at my doorstep; I went closer, and saw a woman lying on her back with her lips turned into her mouth and her eyes neither open nor closed. Her hair was gray, her face the same color as the pavement. A slight, brown-haired woman was giving her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, while a well-built brown-skinned man with hair close-cropped like a skullcap was performing chest massage. He and the woman giving mouth-to-mouth were counting, “One, two, three, four, *five*.” Then he would pause and she would breathe into the woman’s mouth.

A police car drove up and a young Hispanic cop got out. He went over to the

woman and talked to the pair trying to revive her. Someone pointed out to him the woman’s son, a tall, gangly man who stood nearby, kind of bobbing up and down and nodding to himself. The cop patted the son on the arm and spoke to him. A large, lumpy-faced man with his pants high on his waist said to me, “The ambulance will never come. They never come when you call any—more. They don’t care. In New York nobody cares.

People are so arrogant on the street in Manhattan. I call New York a lost city. Used to be a great city, now it’s a lost city. People are nicer out west or upstate. I went to Methodist Hospital and the nurse wouldn’t talk to me. I told her right to her face . . .” After a minute I realized it made no difference if I listened to him or not. The pair at work on the woman paused for a moment while the man asked if anyone had a razor so he could cut the woman’s shirt. Someone found a

pocket knife. He bent over his work again. Minutes passed. The cop asked if he was getting tired and he said he wasn’t. Sirens rose in the distance, faded. Then one rose and didn’t fade, and in the next second an Emergency Medical Service truck from Long Island College Hospital pulled up. The chest-massage guy didn’t quit until the EMS paramedic took over; then he straightened up, looked at the truck, and said, “Long Island? Fuckin’ Methodist is only three blocks away.”

The EMS guys put the woman on a stretcher and lifted her into the back of the truck. Hands gathered up a few items the woman had dropped on the sidewalk; someone pointed out her false teeth. The woman who had been giving mouth-to-mouth bent over and picked up the teeth. She paused just a second before touching them. I thought this was from squeamishness; then I saw it was from care. Gently she handed the teeth to one of the paramedics. Then she and the chest-massage guy parted without a word, or none that I saw. The guy walked toward his car, a two-tone Pontiac. Apparently he had just been driving by; its door was still open. I went up to him and thanked him for what he had done. I shook his hand. His strength went right up my arm like a warm current. I ran after the woman, who was now well down the block. I tapped her shoulder and she turned and I said

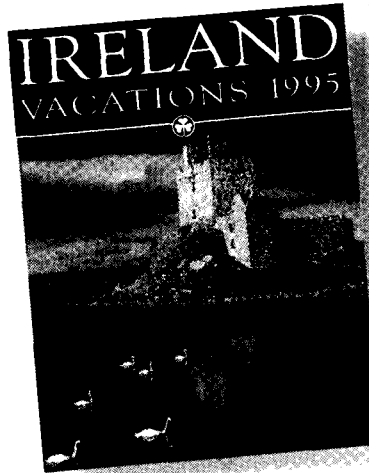


thank you. Her eyes were full of what had just happened. There were tears on her upper cheeks. She said something like, "Oh, of course, don't mention it." She was a thin-faced white woman with Prince Valiant hair and a green windbreaker—an ordinary-looking person, but glowingly beautiful.

The EMS guys and the cop worked on the woman in the back of the truck with the doors open. The crowd dispersed. The son crouched inside the truck holding the IV bottle for a while; then he stood outside again. Eventually the cop got out of the back of the truck. The son climbed in, the EMS guys closed the doors, and the truck drove off with sirens going. The cop sat in his car. The window was down. I walked over and asked, "Excuse me—did they ever get a pulse?" He winced slightly at the nakedness of my question. A pause. Then he shook his head. "Nahhh. Not really."

I went to the park across the street. A bunch of kids were hanging around the entrance jawing back and forth at each other. In my neighborhood there is a gang called NAB, or Ninth Avenue Boys. Newspaper stories say they've done a lot of beatings and robberies nearby. From a few feet away I heard one kid say to another, "You shut your stupid fuckin' chicken-breath mouth." I felt as strong as the strangers I had just talked to. I walked through the kids without fear. ☛

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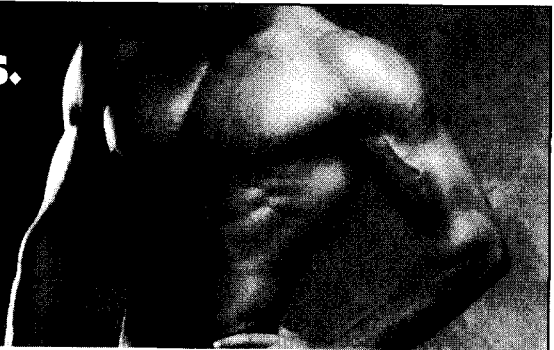
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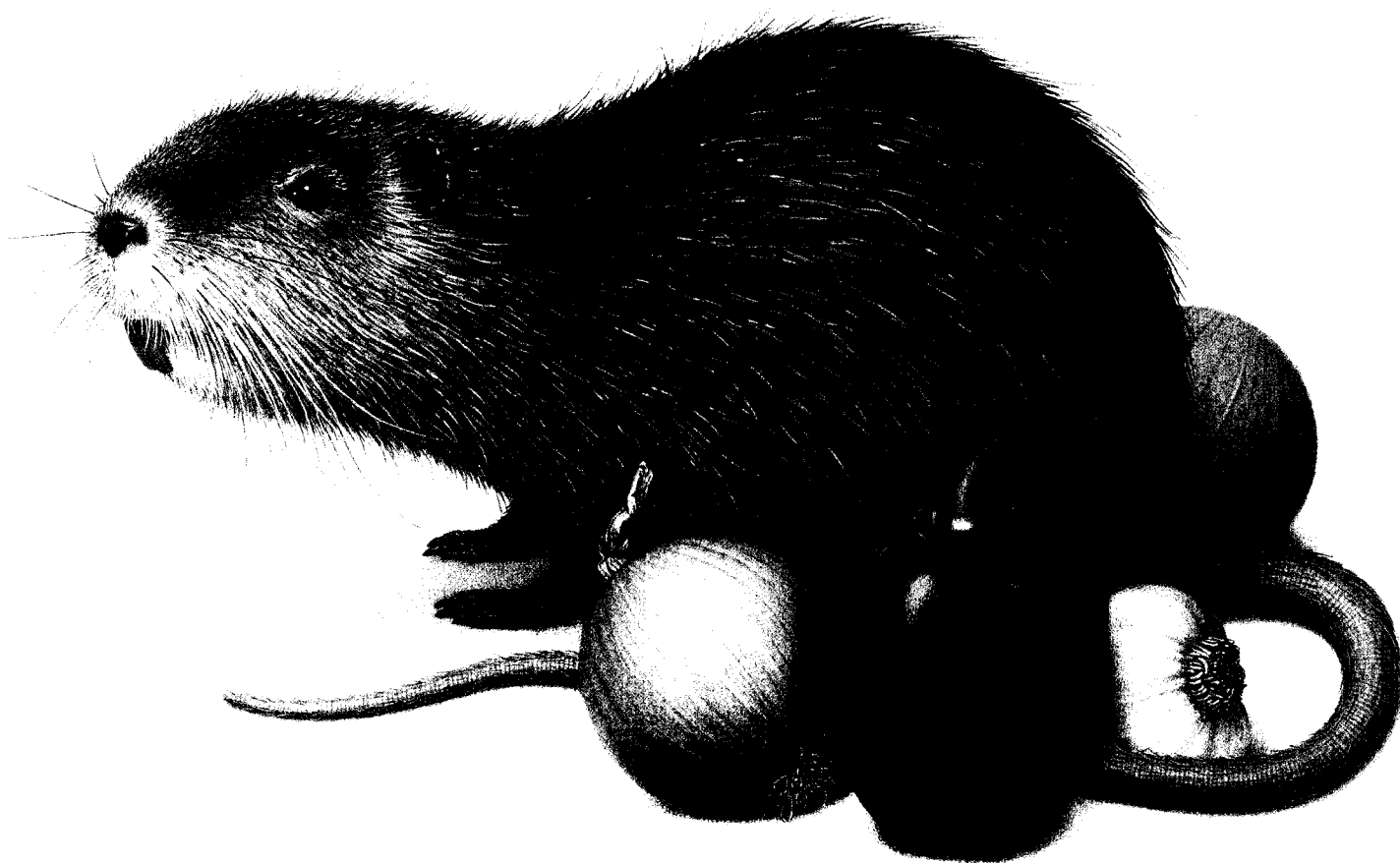
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The Nutria Problem

Louisiana may have found a solution to its nutria crisis. Whether lovers of Cajun cooking will buy the idea is unclear

I WAS, I'll admit, taken with the notion that Louisiana has a scheme to eat its way out of its nutria crisis. In south Louisiana people tend to discuss nutrias in more or less the same tone of voice that Texans might use to discuss armadillos. The tone of voice is not the one you'd employ for serious statements about grace and nobility in the animal kingdom. A nutria is about the shape and size of a small beaver—except for the tail, which is, I'm afraid, very much like the tail of a rat. There are other features that do not please. Nutria fur is used for coats, but the guard hairs that cover the

usable fur are a snarl. The nutria's hind feet are webbed, which somehow does not make a nice contrast with its front feet. It has four clearly visible incisors, two up and two down—wide and curved and exceedingly long and, well, not to put too fine a point on it, orange.

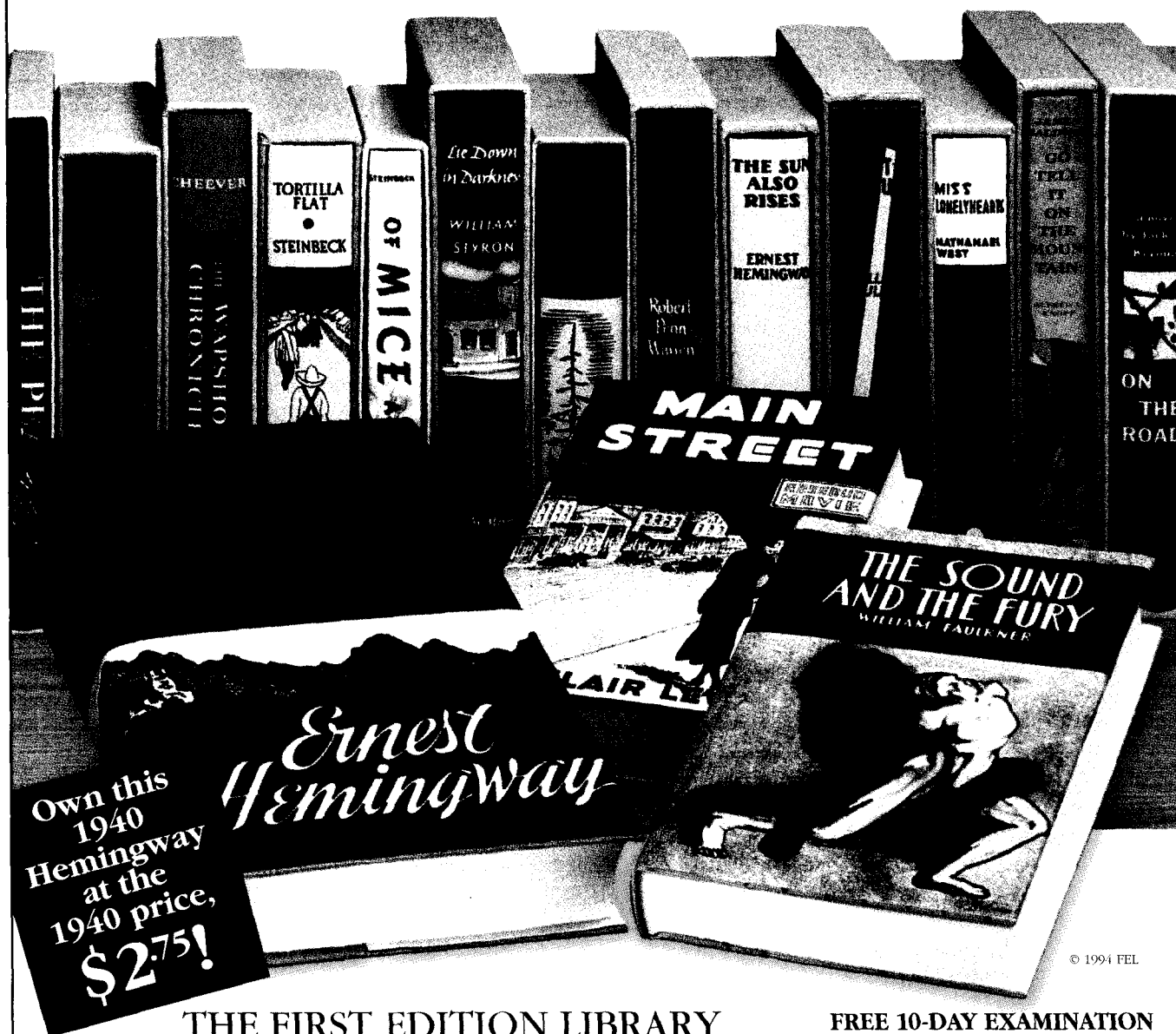
The unsettling appearance of nutrias might cause less nervous laughter if they weren't so numerous. In the bayous and swamps and marshes and sugarcane fields a couple of hours southwest of New Orleans, an area settled in the eighteenth century by the people who became known as Cajuns, there are liter-

ally millions of nutrias. They are not shy. On a recent trip to Louisiana, I heard more than one person estimate the number of nutrias observed on, say, an afternoon's canoe trip as "so many that it was kind of scary." Nutrias are spotted near shopping malls in Lafayette and even in the drainage canals of Jefferson Parish, in suburban New Orleans. Last winter the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* carried a quotation from a trapper that sounded as if it had been snatched from a horror movie: "They're eating Jefferson Parish. It's out of control."

Most of Louisiana's nutria population can be traced to a hundred or so nutrias that escaped from the Avery Island spread of E. A. (Mr. Ned) McIlhenny, the Tabasco mogul, around 1940; they were the descendants of thirteen he had imported from Argentina, the nutria's native habitat, a few years before. There is some indication that Mr. Ned, who was devoted to maintaining the coastal marsh of Louisiana in its natural state, may have been raising the nutrias with the intention of introducing them into the marsh anyway, as a way to broaden the trapping industry, then dominated by hunters of

by Calvin Trillin

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muskrat pelts, or as a way to keep down objectionable aquatic weeds—like the water hyacinth, another South American import that some people thought the nutria would just naturally gobble up.

Whether by accident or by design, the descendants of Mr. Ned's nutrias did come to dominate the Louisiana fur industry. At the height of the boom, in the late seventies, Louisiana trappers brought in nearly two million nutria pelts a year, most of which were sent to Europe, where nutria has always been more popu-

"I don't think we're going to solve the whole problem with Chef Paul. But he might be part of the answer."

lar as a fur than it is in the United States. In those days the nutria was often thought of as a successful transplant—an economic incentive to preserve vital marshlands. Given the amount of money coming in, some people had probably decided that the nutria was, in its own way, rather attractive.

ALTHOUGH the nutria industry was based almost entirely on pelts, some carcasses were ground up for mink food, and some were employed in a Department of Agriculture project as a medium for growing screwworms. (The uses of nutria carcasses have tended to be unromantic.) In Washington, Louisiana, I met a woman named June Lowrey who for a time was making jewelry out of nutria teeth—a business she launched by acquiring a hundred nutria heads and, after a long and frustrating afternoon with an ordinary pair of pliers, consulting her dentist for some advice on tools. Her jewelry business came to an end when she discovered that nutria teeth grow brittle with age. Until then they are striking—two-tone, because the back and the part beneath the gum are white. Lowrey referred to them as "swamp ivory."

In the eighties the price of nutria pelts began to fall, and trappers began to find

that it wasn't worth their while to go out. The nutria birth rate, though, did not adjust to the shrinkage of the market. Rice and sugarcane farmers began complaining that their irrigation dams and crops were being destroyed by nutrias. Even more serious, evidence was mounting that nutrias, which destroy a lot more vegetation than they actually consume, were obliterating entire sections of the coastal wetlands. Scientists have a succinct term for the damage nutrias can do to a section of marsh: an "eat-out."

As evidence of marsh destruction was documented, the nutria joke often heard among conservationists was that Paul Prudhomme ought to be persuaded to invent a nutria recipe popular enough to bring the nutrias under control. The reference was to Prudhomme's impact on the redfish. In the late seventies, while working as a chef in a renowned New Orleans restaurant called Commander's Palace, Prudhomme decided that the method for cooking what was sometimes called an Indian steak—tossing a steak on a ferociously hot piece of cast iron known to chefs as a flat-top, so that the meat was seared on the outside and juicy inside—could work with firm-fleshed fish. He happened to try it with redfish, which is the name people in Louisiana use for red drum—a fish then popular mainly among sportsmen. The menu at Commander's Palace—and at Mr. B's Bistro, where Prudhomme went next—called it grilled redfish. When Prudhomme opened his own restaurant in the French Quarter, K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen, he used a white-hot skillet instead of a flat-top and called the dish blackened redfish. It was an instant hit—so popular that he had to ration it to one order per table. Within six weeks of its introduction, he told me when I stopped in to see him in New Orleans, a customer reported having seen blackened redfish on a menu in Florida.

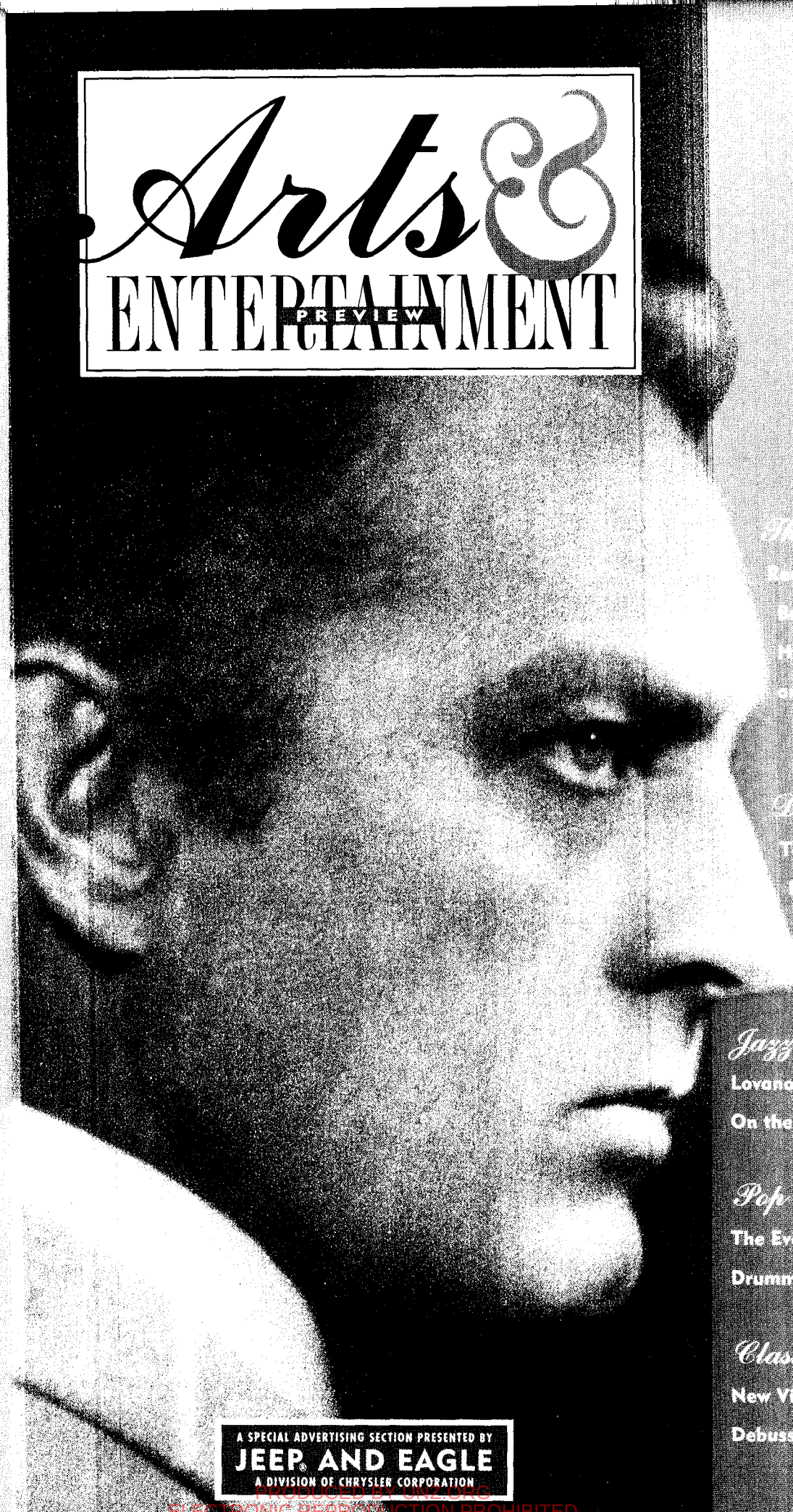
Partly owing to the impact of Chef Paul, a massive and magnetic figure, restaurants around the country began including on their menus a version of this dish, which they called Cajun—and which Prudhomme, a legitimate Cajun from Opelousas, described sadly as "burnt fish with a whole lot of pepper on it." It was immaterial that the only Cajuns who had ever eaten blackened redfish were those who had traveled to New

Orleans, a city where Cajuns had traditionally been ridiculed as ignorant country folk with funny accents, and had dined at Commander's Palace or Mr. B's Bistro or K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen. Some commercial fishermen began going after schools of redfish with spotter planes. Although Prudhomme himself switched to blackened tuna early on, the national redfish craze continued. He felt guilty about the redfish, he told me, and guilty about the glop that was being passed off as Cajun food. ("This is my culture!") In 1988 Louisiana banned the commercial catching of redfish in its waters. The ban created a new crime: redfish laundering. In an ambitious undercover operation in July of 1993, wildlife agents arrested forty-five people on charges of sneaking Louisiana redfish to Mississippi and then bringing it back to sell in Louisiana.

Getting Paul Prudhomme to do for the nutria on purpose what he had done for the redfish by accident did sound like a joke, but Robert Thomas, a biologist at the Louisiana Nature and Science Center, in New Orleans, thought Chef Paul might at least demonstrate what a nutria could taste like when it emerged from the pot of a master. A year or so ago Thomas asked Prudhomme to provide some demonstration dishes for a day of food and entertainment and education which the Louisiana Nature and Science Center had decided to call a nutriafest.

As if doing penance for all those redfish that were sacrificed so that Yankees could coat them with pepper and call them Cajun, Prudhomme showed up to serve nutria dishes that included cubed and deep-fried nutria, prepared more or less the way he prepares the crayfish appetizer that the K-Paul menu introduced as Cajun popcorn. The experience made him think that the notion of serving nutria in restaurants someday was not so far-fetched. Bob Thomas points out that nutrias are lean animals and are strictly vegetarian. ("You just have to get by the fact that it's a big old rodent-looking thing.") He says that in Eastern Europe, where raising nutria for both fur and meat caught on years ago, the meat, known as *ragon-din*, is considered a delicacy. He says that nutria meat "accepts seasoning well," which sounds like a nice way of saying that it doesn't have a whole lot of taste. By the second annual nutriafest, last

(Continued on page 40)



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

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Hour
on the Stage

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Rudolf
Nureyev

Jazz

Lovano and Bartz
On the Up and Up

Pop

The Evolution of
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New Visions of
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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND LAURA JACOBS

THE GREAT PROFILE

In the right hands, the one-actor play is an exhilarating form. Think back, if you will, to Julie Harris as Emily Dickinson in William Luce's *The Belle of Amherst*. Or look forward, if you prefer, to Luce's *Barrymore*. The Barrymore in question (you will recall that there were several) is the glamorous, driven John, impersonated by Christopher Plummer. The script depicts the aging thespian in the last year of his life, running lines from *Richard III* on an abandoned Broadway stage and confronting his demons.

If Plummer is in customary form, his acting will hold in balance the canny, calculating flamboyance of yesteryear, the psychological acuity of the moderns, and the hip, cool detachment of today. Will he channel the "real" John Barrymore? Of course not. But probably no one today could get closer. Out-of-town tryouts, announced for this spring, with a Broadway opening to follow, have been postponed. As we go to press, the best advice is to stay tuned.

—A.B.



John
Barrymore

HELL TO PAY IN THE WINDY CITY



The bad guy, c.1877

The carnal sort. This time, sex is the devil's small print. In exchange for unending life, the hitherto virginal Don Juan agrees to seduce a different woman every day. The penalty for nonperformance: damnation. Without betraying Ives's design, we can reveal that Don Juan stays in the game for quite a while. After a first act in the Seville of 1599, *Don Juan in Chicago* leaps the seas and the centuries for two more acts in the

When a sulfurous fellow by the name of Mephistopheles is collecting a contract executed in blood, you might suppose that the man with the sliced fingertip is Faust. But in a new play by David Ives the signer is Don Juan, who shares the Faustian craving for infinite knowledge, though not, as

Ives tells it, of the

present, building to a finale cribbed from the long-winded second part of Goethe's *Faust*. But hold it: a three-act play by David Ives? David Ives, who once lived by the motto "Brevity is the soul of wit"? David Ives, who packed half a dozen plays into two hours for the fizzy six-pack *All in the Timing*? It has been observed that since antiquity the Western world has dreamed up only two myths. Having folded them into one, Ives evidently felt the need for a broader canvas (March 1–April 2 at Primary Stages, New York; call 212-333-7471).

—A.B.

RADICAL LEGACY

The most exciting corps de ballet I've seen this year isn't even at the ballet: it's the young women of the Martha Graham Dance Company. Velvety, lithe, and lightning fast, these barefoot-babe priestesses not only are more red-blooded than their ballet sisters but remind us that the image of an



The Martha Graham Dance Company

autonomous modern woman was invented way before the 1970s—sans jargon. The company is now touring with its *Radical Graham* program, a lineup of the early works, from the 1930s and 1940s, that won Graham her first notoriety and her place in history. Standouts: *Cave of the Heart*, Graham's ruthless Medea dance; the masterly theatrics of the "Sketches" from *Chronicle*. The domestic tour stops in Stony Brook, New York (February 18); Storrs, Connecticut (February 21); Cleveland (February 24); San Diego (February 28–March 1); Los Angeles (March 2–3); and Santa Rosa, California (March 4–6).

—L.J.

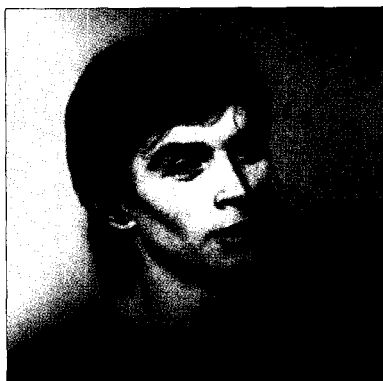
Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Laura Jacobs is editor in chief of Stagebill.

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST IN MOTION

A book that speaks to a mass audience—that's what publishers want when a dancer or dance writer approaches them with an idea. Take the high road, and you'll be read by a few hundred peers; kiss and tell, like Gelsey Kirkland in *Dancing on My Grave*, and you'll sell. Since Nureyev's death, in 1993, three publishers—two American and one British—have scrambled into the wake, knowing there's a big chunk of story yet untold about the ballet legend who died of AIDS. The first American biography is out—and out. Otis Stuart's *Perpetual Motion: The Public and Private Lives of Rudolf Nureyev* is written with a critic's insight, a fan's gush,

and a gay agenda. Telling the story with fresh details and a new spin, Stuart overturns the apocryphal, suggesting that when Nureyev defected, in 1961, sexual freedom was as much on his mind as artistic expression. The writing matches the flying pace of Nureyev's own jet-set lifestyle, but Stuart is careful to set scenes and create a

clear context for a nonballet audience. His painting of the Ufa wilds of Nureyev's formative early life—the primitive climes, the Stalinist horror—is superb. And the last chapters of the book, describing the dancer's decade-long secret fight against AIDS, do eloquent honor to Nureyev's startling, singular will. —L.J.



Rudolf Nureyev (1938–1993)

Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

RESURGENT SAXES MAKE THE SCENE

In a period dominated by senior citizens and twentysomething newcomers, the emergence of Joe Lovano (born in 1952) among the jazz-saxophone elite is the success story of the nineties. Having been featured with Paul Motian and John Scofield, and having led his own diverse combo projects, Lovano now teams with the composer Gunther Schuller on *Rush Hour* (Blue Note), an orchestral album as astringent and combustible as Lovano's tenor.

Rather than providing the lushness of most "with strings" sessions, Schuller deploys his ensemble strategically, massing it on occasion yet also isolating flute, bass clarinet, harp, or tympani. Lovano extends the textural variety with duet and trio interludes that further cut the orchestral weight. He ranges from the romantic balladry of "The Love I Long For" and a swirling "Angel Eyes"



Joe Lovano



Gary Bartz

to the sequential cataclysms of "Headin' Out, Movin' In." *Rush Hour* proceeds from mood to mood, subtly building tension as Lovano meets this uncommon challenge with gritty lyricism.

Could belated recognition also be upon the alto saxophonist Gary Bartz, who is twelve years Lovano's senior? After incendiary late-sixties recordings, a detour into fusion, and years of limited exposure, Bartz recently has grown more active. *The Red and Orange Poems* (Atlantic), a septet effort, finds his rich and bluesy alto gaining luster against a two-piece brass section, while the program of standards, original ballads, and a touch of soca is quietly probing. He has burned brighter in the past—but this album, with key assists from the trumpeter Eddie Henderson and the pianist Mulgrew Miller, leaves no doubt that Bartz is back.

—B.B.

INVOKING AN "ALTERNATIVE" MUSE

From Rhode Island, Throwing Muses first developed a following of depressed college students on the Boston bar circuit—always a susceptible market for revolutionaries. And Throwing Muses were revolutionary in their disdain for traditional song structures. They pulsed but didn't climax, replacing linear song and story with an eerie ebb and flow of emotion. Their leader, Kristin Hersh, seemed artistically descended from Patti Smith, having inherited the chromosomes for visionary poetry and compelling singing but not (luckily) for pretension. When the band's lineup changed in the early nineties (Hersh's step-sister Tanya Donnelly left to form Belly), Hersh put out a mostly acoustic

solo album, *Hips and Makers* (4AD), that should have been a huge hit and is still worth looking for. Regrouped as a trio, Throwing Muses has now returned with *University* (Sire), an "alternative" rock album that ought to expand their audience far beyond a cult following. Hersh has a winning gift for singing delicate, introspective melodies over pounding, droning riffs in a not-quite-psychedelic style. The best song is probably the opening cut, "Bright Yellow Gun," a rumination about a dangerous lover, which grabs your emotions with an unexpected cello vibrating in a minor key around the guitar riff. But there's remarkably little filler revealed in any of the fourteen cuts. Throwing Muses will be touring in February and March.

—C.M.Y.



David Narcizo, Hersh, and Bernard Georges (l-r)

IN A GLOBAL GROOVE

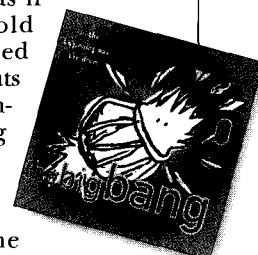
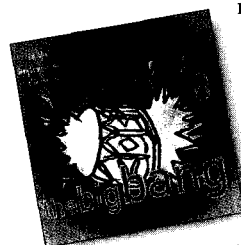
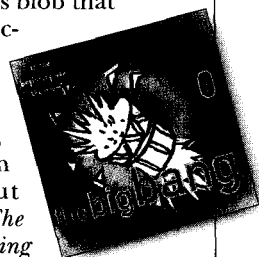
In most forms of music, percussion may be viewed as the cake, and everything else as the frosting. If it ain't got that swing, what you've got is a formless blob that cannot sustain satisfaction after the first bite. If it does have that swing, just about anything is possible, including waking up in the morning without coffee—for which *The Big Bang: In the Beginning Was the Drum* (Ellipsis Arts) is highly recommended. A three-CD anthology that surveys drumming styles from around the world, *The Big Bang* patterns its tracks for spectacular contrast rather than geographical logic. It opens with chimpanzees pound-

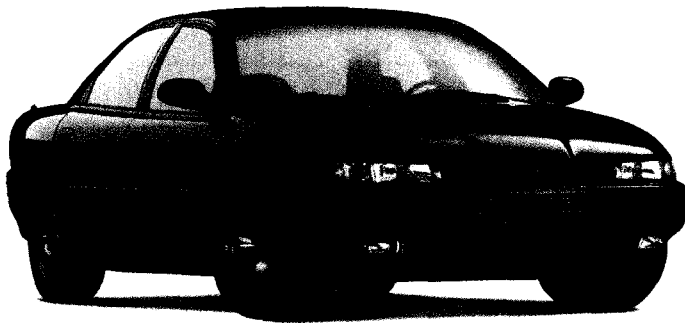
ing on hollow tree trunks in Gomba, Tanzania, and proceeds through a dazzling array of ethnic groups and instruments mixed with the most sophisticated of contemporary jazz, rock, and avant-garde drummers. Those attuned to traditional Western sounds will be surprised by the sheer variety of bangs, booms, thuds, crashes, and natural noises that become enchanting music. The Baka pygmies, for example, bathe with a marvelous rhythm, using the surface of the water as a drum. The effect is strangely calming, even regressive, as if you were two years old again and getting bathed by your mom. Other cuts are designed more to induce ecstatic dancing and mystical visions, or to fire up the warriors for attacking another tribe. But whatever the purpose, the listener gets more than three hours of some of the world's greatest drummers playing lead. That's a very substantial cake, and you won't miss the frosting.

—C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe and CD Review.

Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Musician, Playboy, and other publications.





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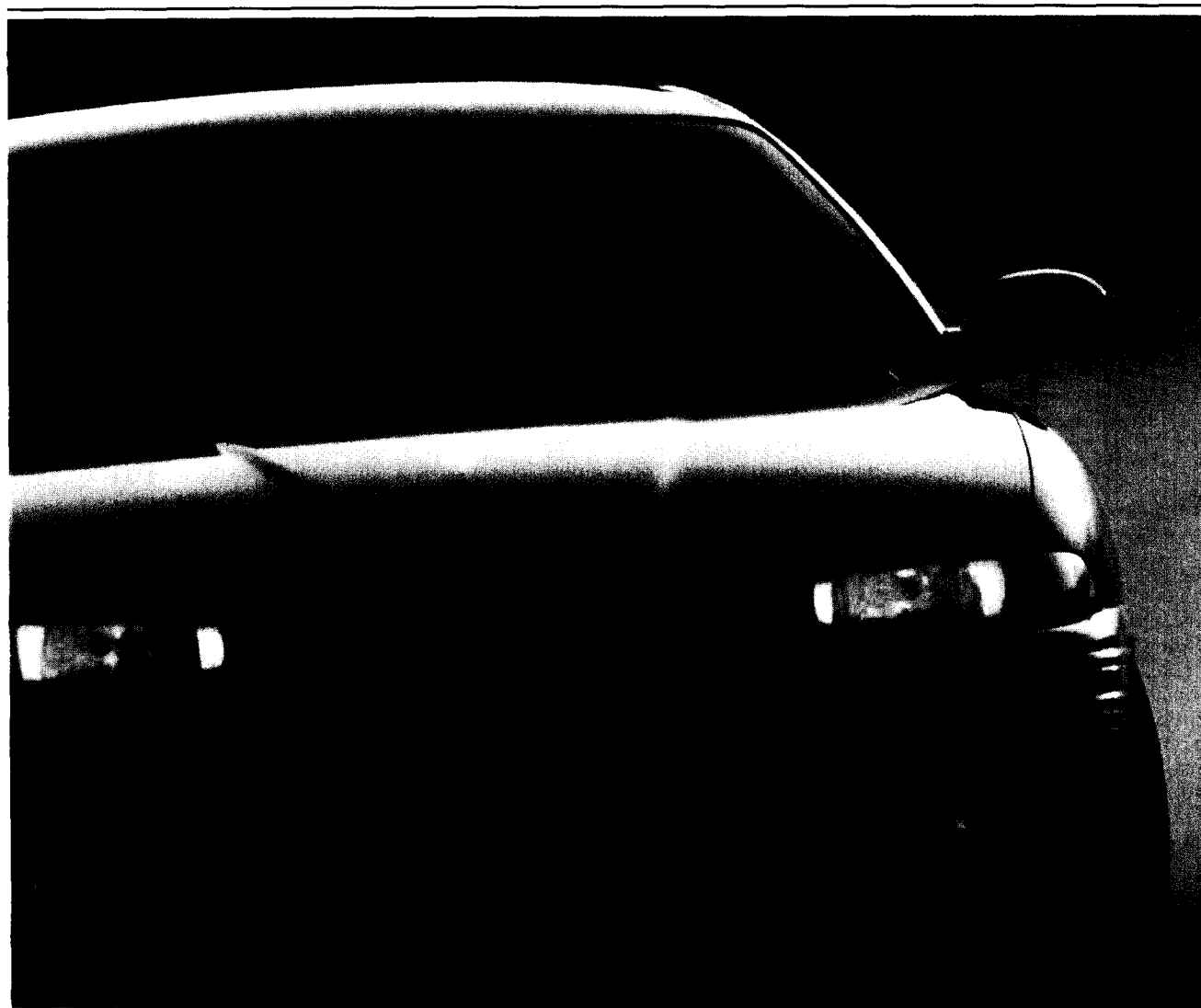


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Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

SOUND SENSATION

Writers have compared Evelyn Glennie to a pixie, an athlete, a gazelle, and a fashion model, though at five foot two in her bare feet (which is how she prefers to perform), she would pose no threat on a runway to Iman or Cindy Crawford. Her domain, in fact, is what layfolk know as the percussion section and orchestra musicians like to call the kitchen. Amid her battery of congas, marimbas, chimes, snare drums, tubular bells, cymbals, ratchets, and wood blocks, the twenty-nine-year-old Scotswoman

cooks up banquets of sound that encompass anything and everything from big bangs to perfumed whispers at the threshold of silence. She can take in none of this the way her audiences do. Her hearing, which began to fail when she was eight, was virtually gone by the

Evelyn Glennie

time she started percussion studies, at age twelve. Today the first full-time solo percussionist in the world hears the bell of a loud telephone right by her ear as a weak crackle. Yet, by feel and by sight, she makes music to astonish the world of those who hear. A uniquely rich picture of her art emerges from the concerto *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* (recorded on the Catalyst label), inspired by fifteenth-century French plainchant and written for Glennie by her fellow Scot James MacMillan. This month she performs *Veni, Veni* with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (February 24-26; call 414-273-7206). A North American concert and recital tour (January 26-March 3) brings Glennie also to Morrow, Georgia; Vancouver; Quebec; Toronto; Portland, Oregon; Baltimore; Santa Fe; Chicago; Winnipeg; and Anchorage. Her repertoire ranges from Vivaldi (in transcription) to Milhaud, Miki, Rzewski, and Panufnik. Check local listings for details.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

A PRINCE, HIS BROTHER, HIS WIFE, AND HER LOVER

Pelléas et Mélisande, Debussy's only completed opera, set verbatim from the play by Maurice Maeterlinck, hangs in the imagination like an equation one can never crack, transparent and impenetrable. The givens look fairly simple. The widowed prince Golaud remarries. Mélisande, his mysterious second wife, and Pelléas, his younger half-brother, fall in love. By the final curtain the lovers are both dead—Pelléas run through by Golaud's sword, Mélisande in childbed. But

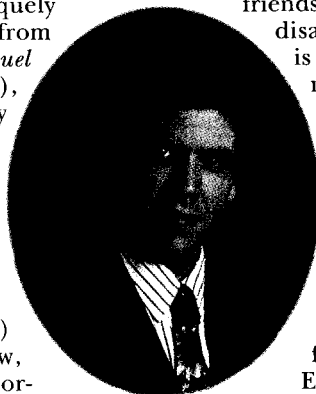
still Golaud does not know the truth of what has passed between them. What matters in Maeterlinck's poisoned fairy tale is not acts but states of feeling, and these Debussy has painted in all their multifarious intensity. Created in the twilight of the past century, *Pelléas* is creeping like a fever into the bones of the subtlest interpreters on the cusp of the new millennium. At the Welsh National Opera the director Peter Stein and the conductor Pierre Boulez have recently pinned it in the twin beams of their fierce intelligence (an interpretation captured on video by Deutsche Grammophon).

The Met's *Pelléas et Mélisande*

The venerable British theater guru Peter Brook has bewitched Paris with a stripped-down chamber version. Now America's shock tactician Peter Sellars mounts his deconstruction at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and its splendid Finnish maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen in the pit (February 4-12; call 213-365-3500). A new production is in store for audiences of the Metropolitan Opera, too, this one directed by Jonathan Miller and conducted by James Levine, whose past navigations through the treacherous, tidal, oceanically seductive score have ranked with the finest achievements of his career (March 23-April 13; call 212-362-6000).

THE LONG GOOD-BYE

Gustav Mahler's sublime orchestral song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*), based on Chinese poetry, is in six movements, divided between two soloists. The odd-numbered songs are for a tenor. The even-numbered songs may be sung by either an alto or a baritone, but the female option generally being preferred if only for contrast in color. Yet the text of the last song—which takes up thirty of the cycle's sixty-odd minutes—explicitly calls for a male "speaker." "Der Abschied" ("The Parting") is a scene of leave-taking between two friends, both men. One,



Thomas Hampson

disappointed in life, is retreating to the mountains, never to return. The specific quality of heartbreak conveyed by an inspired male interpreter might well redefine one's understanding of this profound meditation. Even the great Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, however, seems to have found the right tone elusive. On February 26, with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Thomas Hampson—matinee idol and Mahler scholar—takes up the challenge at Carnegie Hall (call 212-247-7800).

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(Continued from page 32)

spring, Thomas had as a corporate sponsor the McIlhenny Company—another penitent. The cookoff last year was won by a computer specialist who prepared what he called “apple-smoked nutria and wild-mushroom crepe in bourbon-pecan nutria sauce.” Tacos came in second.

I DON'T think we're going to solve the whole problem with Chef Paul,” Greg Linscombe told me, when I called on him at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries office in New Iberia. “But he might be part of the answer.” Linscombe, a biologist, is responsible for both the coastal marsh and the management of fur-bearing animals—interlocking portfolios that have made him into the state's resident expert on what to do about nutria proliferation. His strategy is based on the simple fact that the nutria's only predator—aside from the alligator, which spends part of the year in a sort of hibernating state that inhibits the appetite—is man. Linscombe figures that even if the method of control is spreading poison or offering bounties, several thousand human beings are going to have to be in the marshlands. He would prefer to have them there as trappers in a prosperous industry. To that end he is working

After dinner Sonny took us back into the kitchen and used the carcass to explain a bit about nutria anatomy.

on ways to enhance the price of nutria pelts: Louisiana now has a nutria-marketing consultant, for instance, and a campaign to distinguish its product from Argentine nutria by marketing it as Genuine Louisiana Bayou Nutria. He sees the use of the nutria carcass for human consumption as potentially a way to “put another dollar or dollar and a half into the trapper's pocket”—a supplement that could tip the balance toward persuading someone that trapping nutrias is economically worthwhile.

Linscombe envisions nutria's being offered as a sort of gimmick appetizer in certain restaurants in New Orleans and Lafayette, and eventually finding broader use—the model of alligator meat, now

a significant factor in the economics of both alligator hunting, which was once done strictly for hides, and alligator farming. Inquiries from Asia and Africa have already been received. He reminded me that people from different cultures have differing ideas of what appears appetizing. “Maybe some place in the Far East will want it with the tail on,” he said.

“Or only the tail,” I ventured.

AND so to table. Linscombe had arranged to deliver a few nutrias to Enola Prudhomme, Chef Paul's sister, who runs a restaurant called Prudhomme's Cajun Café, just north of Lafayette. Enola Prudhomme, whose menu already includes “alligator sauce piquante” and wild-boar sausage, is, like her brother, optimistic about the appeal of nutria meat. (“People are going to eat it as a curiosity and then find it really tastes good.”) One of her sons, Sonny, prepared three different dishes for a few of us novice nutria eaters—nutria chili, a sort of nutria fricassee, and panfried nutria tenderloins with a Creole mustard sauce. We cleaned our plates. I suspect that any one of Sonny's dishes could have taken the nutriafest cookoff hands down, if I may say that with no disrespect intended toward the apple-smoked nutria and wild-mushroom crepe in bourbon-pecan nutria sauce. If I had been pressed to say what nutria reminded me of, I would have said rabbit, although I may have been biased in that direction by the thought of a rabbit's nice fluffy tail.

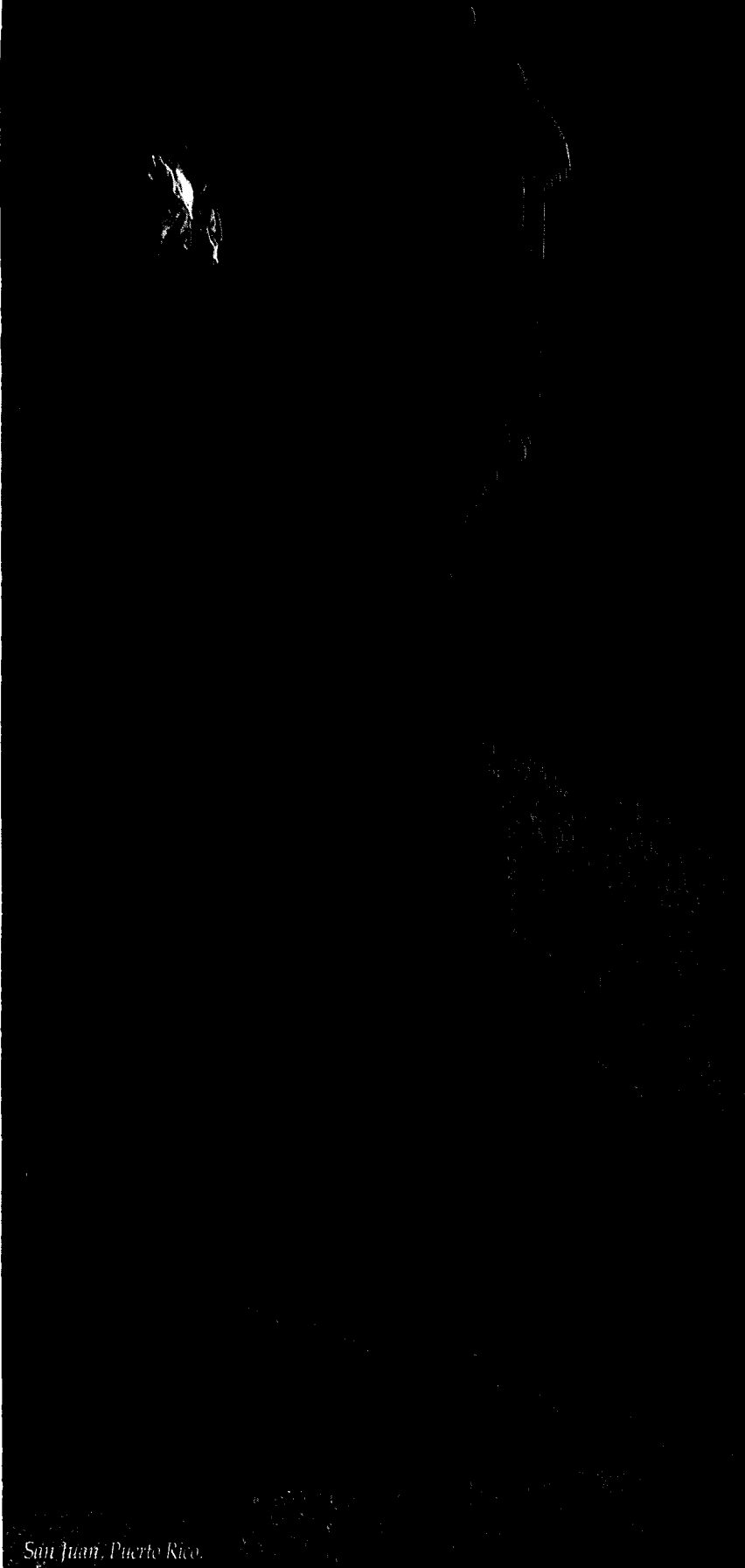
After dinner Sonny took us back into the kitchen, so that he could use the nutria carcass he had left to explain a bit about nutria anatomy. He said that the meat is remarkably lean—both Paul and

Barry Jean Ancelet
NUTRIA SAUCE PIQUANTE A LA FORTENOT
5 + 6 lbs. Nutria
3 large Onions
2 large bell peppers (Green & Red)
4 stalks Celery
4 cloves garlic (mne)
6 slices Bacon (fried)
1 Bay leaf
with supporting
Marinate overnight with the following:
2 tps. each: salt, black & red peppers, garlic powder, onion powder, Worcestershire Sauce & mustard.
Plus 2 tps. white vinegar.
Rub these seasonings on meat.
Cooking: Brown meat in oil. Cut up meat & refrigerate. Fry meat in a black pot. Remove meat when tender. Make small roux, add onions, bell peppers, celery & garlic. ADD

Enola Prudhomme have found they have to add some pork in order to make nutria sausage—and easy to work with, except for a membrane that has to be removed. I assume that Greg Linscombe would avoid mentioning the membrane in his meat-marketing schemes; it's one of those words, like “rodent.”

The next afternoon I paid a visit to a friend named Barry Jean Ancelet, a folklorist who is the chairman of the modern-language department at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. Barry, assisted by his wife, Caroline, was preparing nutria sauce piquante. In Barry's view, the nutria probably would have joined other swamp critters in the Cajun diet long ago if it had been around when poverty and isolation enhanced Cajun inventiveness in the kitchen. By the time nutrias began to appear in the marshlands in any numbers, he said, the Second World War had already drawn a lot of Cajuns into the cities and to their first salaried jobs. Although Cajuns remain much more adventurous in their eating habits than most other Americans, the days when they were assumed to eat just about anything are gone. As someone I met in New Iberia said, “Why eat nutria when you can get frozen chicken breasts cheap at Sam's?”

One of the Ancelet's sons, François, put a nutria skull on the table as a sort of centerpiece, and we sat down. The nutria sauce piquante was terrific. Barry showed me the recipe. It had some instructions familiar to Cajun cooking, such as “make small roux, add onions, bell peppers, celery, and garlic” and “add parsley and onion tops just before serving.” The nutria was a triumph, I told Barry, although



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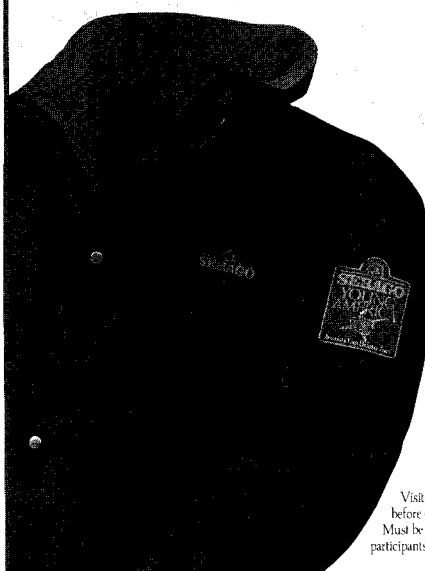
I had to allow for the possibility that prepared in his sauce piquante the *Times-Picayune*, which presumably also accepts seasoning well, would have been a triumph. Putting both the tail and the membrane from my mind, I asked for seconds.

"I actually call it Nutria Caroline," Barry said, with a hint of a bow toward his wife. "I thought of calling it Nutria Cagney."

"Nutria Cagney?"
Barry stood and, holding his elbows close to his body and his hands pointed straight ahead, said, "You dirty rat."

"YOU dirty rat!" I was still thinking, as I arrived at the New Orleans airport for the flight home. I had spoken to a couple of other chefs in New Orleans, who thought that the notion of restaurants' serving nutrias was somewhere between a pipe dream and an opportunity to use phrases like "free-range nutrias"—in other words, an excuse for more nutria jokes. Then I happened to pass the stand that sells Louisiana seafood to departing passengers. It had peeled crayfish tails, which seems natural—except that people in most of the country still won't eat what they call crawdaddies or mudbugs, and in the days before Paul Prudhomme opened his restaurant, crayfish were not easy to come by even in New Orleans. The stand also had turtle meat and alligator-tail meat and both fresh and smoked gator sausage. Why not nutria?

Would it really be impossible to develop someday one of those everything-but-the-squeal operations, which could harvest nutrias at a profit and protect the marshlands at the same time? The airport would sell gift packs of nutria sauce piquante and nutria étouffée and nutria gumbo. Deep-fried cubes of nutria would be on the K-Paul menu as swamp popcorn. The hind legs would be sent to Chinese restaurants in New York and San Francisco, where waiters could point to them on the dim-sum carts and say to Occidental customers, "You no like." The fur, brilliantly marketed by the fur consultant, would be what everyone in Paris and Milan was wearing. June Lowrey would have found someone who knows how to protect against brittleness in beautifully polished nutria teeth, set in silver. The tail? Well, we'd have to do something about the tail. ☼



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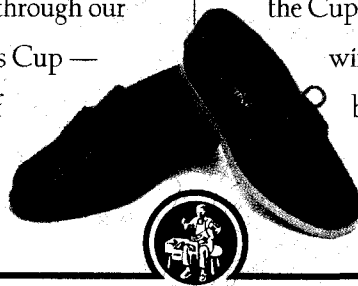
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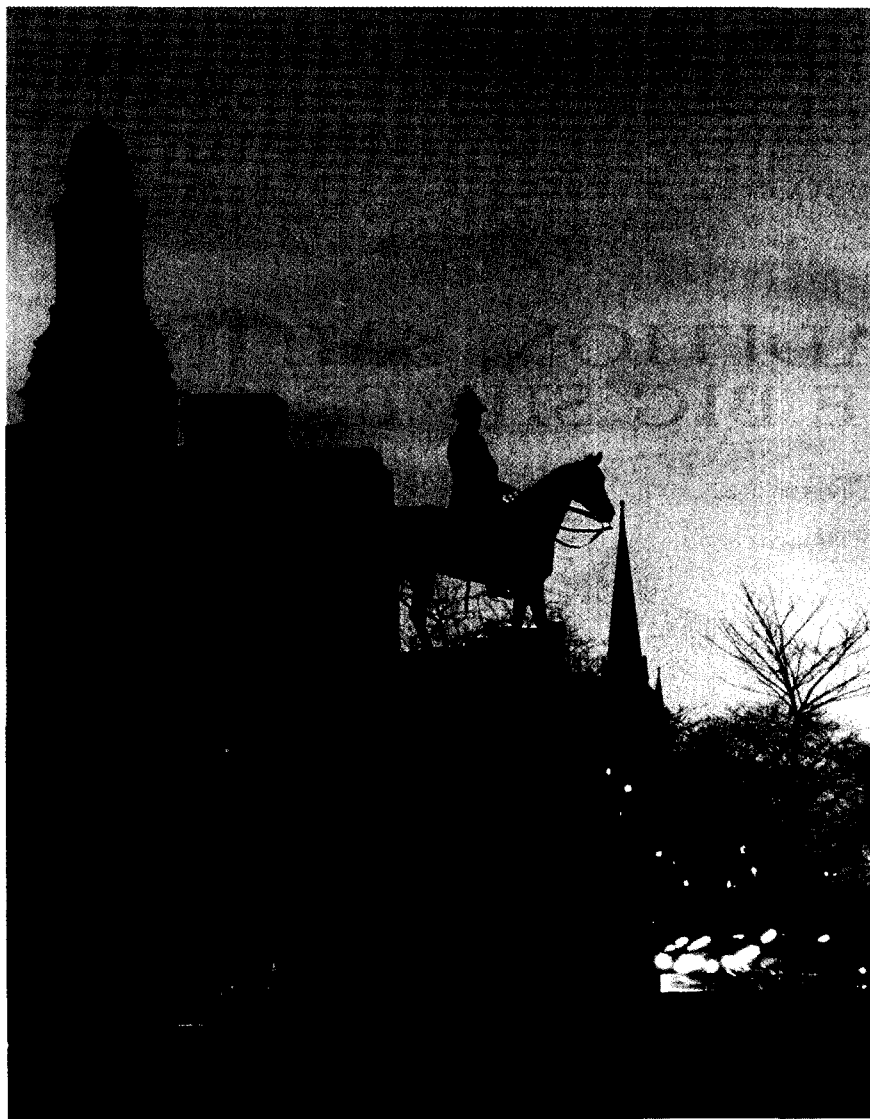
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TOURISTS hit Washington in two great waves. In the springtime come the high school students, for their class trips and civics programs. They jam the fast-food restaurants; they form unruly lines outside the Capitol and the White House; they buy souvenir T-shirts. In the summer come

the families—the Americans by van and station wagon, the foreigners in mammoth tour buses lumbering through the main streets.

by James Fallows

Some are goggle-eyed at the monuments and famous buildings. Most are flirting with each other and disobeying their

I find myself smiling when I see the students.

teacher-chaperones. The town's spring foliage looks fresh at this time of year, and so do the kids.

I try not to notice the families, because when I do, I wince. They may later tell themselves that they had a great time in the capital, but most of them look miserable. The city is hot, they are hot, and they move around in sweating herds. The foreign tourists (you can pick them out instantly by their nicer clothes) move in organized groups—Japanese groups following tour guides with flags, Europeans clustered around guides speaking German or French. The Americans—dad and mom in tank tops, junior in backwards baseball cap—form one great mass trudging from the White House to the Air and Space Museum across the dusty Mall.

I sometimes wish I could take some families aside and say, "Look, this doesn't have to be so hard." Often my wish comes true, when friends from Europe or Asia visit my family in Washington and ask for advice on sightseeing. In return for our help we get a vicarious sense of what is surprising, impressive, and alarming in a city whose quirks we rarely notice anymore. Occasionally we're jolted into seeing Washington through foreign eyes.

When the visitors are Japanese, we beg them to come in the spring. That is the best time for anyone to visit Washington, despite the teenagers' assault, because the flowering trees make the city into one big arboretum. It is especially important for Japanese visitors because of the cherry blossoms. The blossoms that count are not on the famous trees along the Tidal Basin, near the Jefferson Memorial. Those trees were donated by the Japanese government before the First World War and are the stars of the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, but somehow that festival never works out. It's too cold and the buds freeze off, or it has been too warm and the blossoms are gone, or a big wind has roared through and blasted the petals into the Chesapeake.

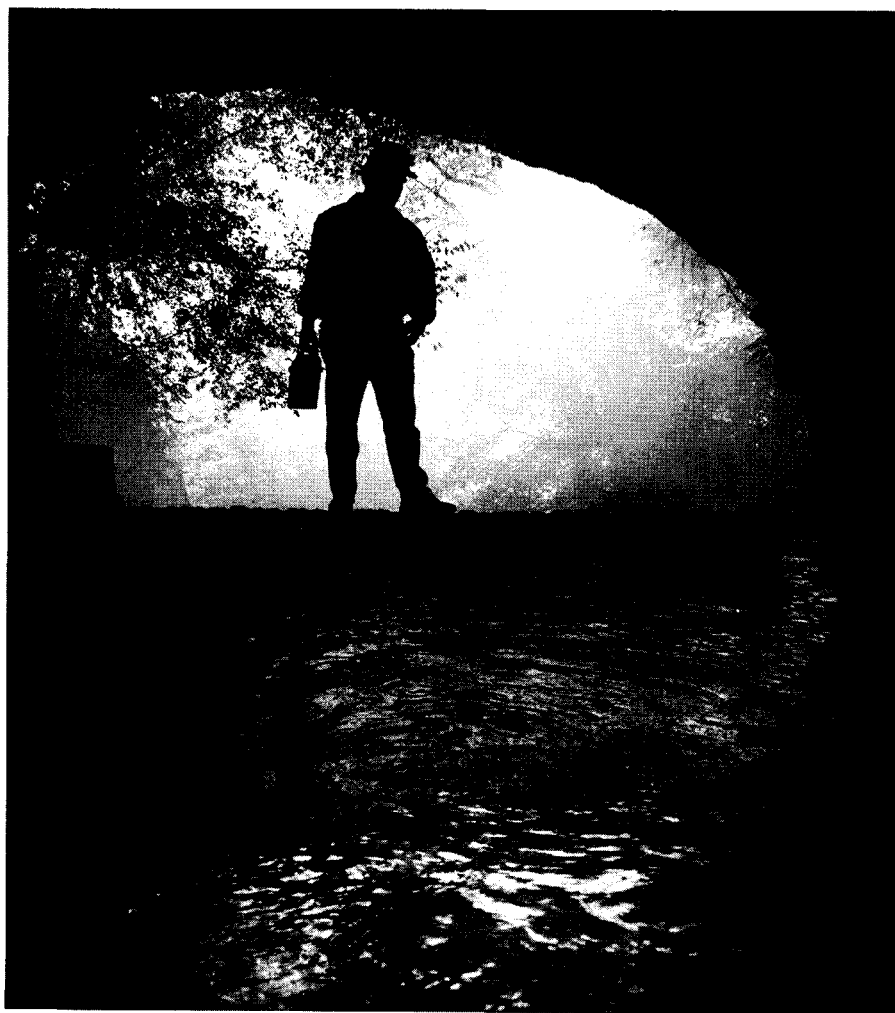
The special cherry blossoms are several miles away, in the ritzy district of Bethesda called Kenwood. This is the kind of district that has its name on a plaque by

**An equestrian general:
Winfield Scott, at Scott Circle**

the entrance gate, and an accompanying country club. Also, William Safire lives here. But I forgive Kenwood a lot because of its dense stands of *sakura*, Japanese flowering cherry trees. The trees are so old, so large, and so thickly planted that when they bloom, in March or April, their branches form a pinkish-white canopy over the road, obscuring the sky. In several seasons of *o-hanami*, or "blossom-viewing," in Japan, I saw nothing as breathtaking. Two springs ago, while having a tedious argument about trade policy with a visiting Japanese official, I said, "Let's not spend the day this way. I've got something to show you." We drove out to Kenwood, and I let him walk for an hour under the trees. As I had hoped, he felt both comforted (about this bond that transcended politics) and overwhelmed (by America's power—even to produce cherry trees!). "We—we do not have this," he finally said.

MY family has not yet had visitors from rural China, but when we do, I will take them to the downtown and suburban avenues that are lined with gingko trees. In the fall thousands of gingko fruits litter the ground near each tree. Most Washingtonians hate the trees then, because when trod underfoot, the fruits reek like vomit. Early in the morning these same trees are surrounded by peasant-looking Asians, collecting fruits (their hard kernels are apparently a delicacy) from the branches and ground before they can be squashed. Visitors from Germany perk up when sent on healthful Sunday walks in Glover-Archbold Park, with trails that run for miles through northwest Washington. The better-known walking routes, on the C&O Canal towpath and in Rock Creek Park, are less enjoyable, because they are also jammed with bikes. If I could identify a group of Swiss mountain folk among the tourist throngs, I would urge them to escape the Mall and drive fifteen miles up the Potomac to Great Falls. This is a surprisingly scenic gorge, with trails on both the Maryland and Virginia sides. A "Billy Goat Trail," on the Maryland side, takes several hours of jumping from rock to rock to negotiate.

Visitors from Northern Europe should arrive in the dead of winter. The weather is mild by their standards, but every two or three years it is cold enough in Washington to freeze the same C&O Canal into



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a marvelous Brueghelian skating course that leads for some twenty miles alongside the Potomac, from Georgetown well past Great Falls. I rarely think of Washington as charming, but it is exactly that on bitter February mornings by the canal. As we sit on the bank lacing up our skates, the only sounds are the *click, click* of long speed skates

and the bursts of chatter in Dutch or Russian from happy groups whooshing by.

These attractions are ways of showing foreigners transplanted versions of cultures they already know. Of course, it is also valuable to show them slices of life quite different from what they would see at home. Even a city as display-conscious as Washington offers several unselfconscious revelations about American ways.

EVERYONE comes to Washington prepared for one of these revelations: the clichéd contrast between power and misery, with drug pushers operating in the shadow of the Capitol. Actually, most visitors see less of this contrast than they expect. The worst areas of New York and Chicago look terrible. The poorest and most dangerous areas of Washington, like those of Los Angeles, don't look as ominous as they are.

Movies and TV documentaries have prepared most foreigners to see bombed-out neighborhoods. Nothing has prepared them for vast middle- and professional-class African-American neighborhoods, like those of upper Sixteenth Street and Rhode Island Avenue. Washington's most interesting sociological journey is a drive (or long walk) straight up Sixteenth Street, starting at Lafayette Park and the White House and ending at the very northern tip of the District of Columbia. The mansions and civic buildings along the way are virtually a fossil record of successive ethnic and religious waves—the huge Masonic temples, the synagogues, the enormous African Methodist Episcopal churches. On either side of northern Sixteenth Street is perhaps the most extensive mainly black luxury-housing area in America. (As a bonus, the Walter Reed Army Medical Center is also just off Sixteenth Street. Its National Mu-



WILLIAM GEIGER/WOODFIN CAMP & ASSOC.

TR, Roosevelt Island

seum of Health and Medicine contains an amazing assortment of ghoulish specimens and displays, the sight of which you may try to forget but never will.)

Some white residential areas of Washington also surprise many visitors. (Only a few of the city's neighborhoods are integrated.) Suburbs like Potomac and Chevy Chase, in Maryland, and McLean, in Virginia, fit a pre-existing picture of what nice suburbs are like. The big houses on leafy streets off Foxhall Road—white Washington's more bucolic counterpart to upper Sixteenth Street—are surprising because they are less than three miles from the White House. I was driving an intense European scholar through these areas at a time when politicians in Washington had just taken an unusually frivolous step. "This is why Americans cannot be serious," the European exclaimed as he saw a mansion in Spring Valley, surrounded by graceful tulip poplar trees. "You live in a park!" In fairness, these same sylvan dwellings have housed many Americans notable for their seriousness, from Richard Nixon to Ira Magaziner.

Another surefire source of fascination for foreign visitors is found thirty miles south of Washington, off Interstate 95. The famous U.S. Marine Corps training site at Quantico is in this area, but few foreigners care about that. They are drawn instead by Potomac Mills, one of the biggest outlet and discount malls on the East Coast. Every store in America looks like a bargain center to European and Asian visitors. Malls like this, where prices are low even by U.S. standards, first stun the visitors and then send them into a buying frenzy. Just as lazy babysitters set children in front of the TV rather than try to entertain them, when we feel tired we ship for-

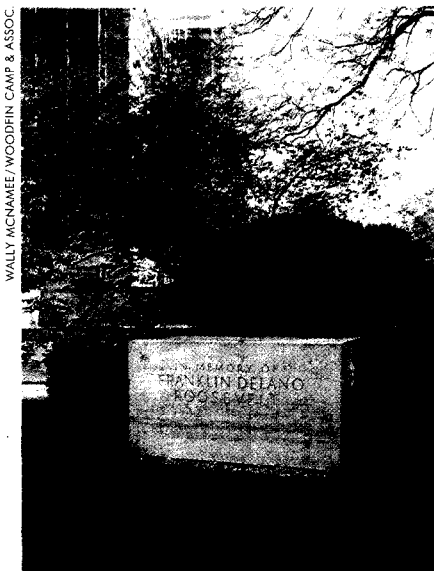
eigners off to Potomac Mills, knowing that they will return loaded with new possessions and grateful for this travel tip.

HAVING done my share of guiding visitors around town through the years, I thought recently that I should let myself be guided by them. I signed up to join two groups of foreigners as they went on Gray Line's special multilingual tour buses. One group was Europeans and West Africans who listened to French as they rode around town. The other was visitors from Japan. I was hoping to overhear some embarrassingly biased narration—bragging about Lafayette and l'Enfant, for instance, in front of the French-speakers. In this I was disappointed; the narrations were faithful translations of Gray Line's English tour. But the tours showed me the city in a completely new way.

The Gray Line tours, which leave from Union Station, near the Capitol, are either four-hour or all-day bus rides through Washington and Arlington. A four-hour tour on the multilingual bus, which has headsets with a choice of narration in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, or Korean, costs \$28 for adults. As a resident, I had long resented the huge buses, preferring the more picturesque Old Town Trolleys that take visitors around the Mall and embassy areas. (The trolley trip takes about two hours and costs \$16. Also, the National Park Service operates a Tourmobile, which stops at all the major monuments and costs \$9.)

My attitude changed once I climbed

A monument not even locals know



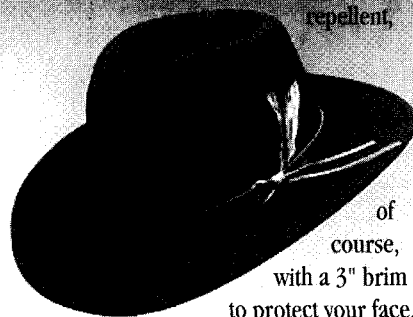
aboard a bus. Inside, it was spacious, cool, and comfortable. Most important, it was high. I could see over the tops of jammed-up cars and the heads of bustling pedestrians, straight to the buildings and monuments. The tours pointed out only one thing I had never seen before—a tiny monument to Franklin Roosevelt near the ugly headquarters of the FBI. But for the first time in years I looked at the city's famous structures and the story they were telling foreign visitors.

Much of the story, as with any set of monuments, concerns war. Washington has many equestrian statues, nearly all of generals. The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, better known as the Iwo Jima monument, lists all the campaigns in which leathernecks have fought—followed by an impressive amount of empty space. (The French-speakers talked as if they were impressed. The Japanese visitors took pictures of each other with the monument and the Potomac in the background.) Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial seems more a work of genius with each passing year. Monuments—it becomes clear, when you see dozens in a day—are touching attempts to grant immortality, by preserving names to be seen when their bearers are dead. The Vietnam memorial is the only one to immortalize all who died for their nation on the battlefield.

Yet the message that struck me more, as I tried to see what the foreigners were seeing, was how much work over how many years has gone into holding the country together. The challenge that faced Lincoln during the Civil War is only the most extreme example. Apart from the generals, almost everyone honored with a plaque, a statue, or a building in Washington devoted his or her life to building the institutions through which self-government operates. The institutions didn't grow by themselves. The statue of Albert Gallatin outside the Treasury, of A. Philip Randolph inside Union Station, of Teddy Roosevelt on Roosevelt Island, in the Potomac—these and dozens of other symbols on the tour were reminders of architects and builders whose best efforts had allowed a functioning national structure to arise. Perhaps the new congressmen arriving in Washington should take an outsiders' tour of the city, to get an idea of the structure's history before they begin taking the thing apart. ☺

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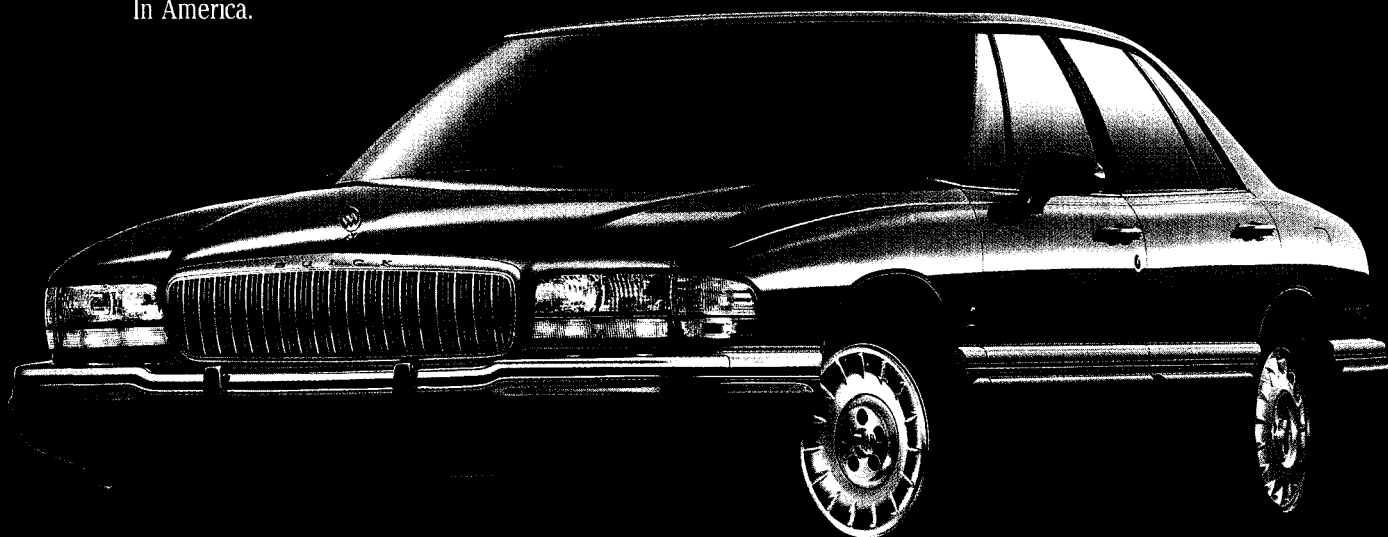
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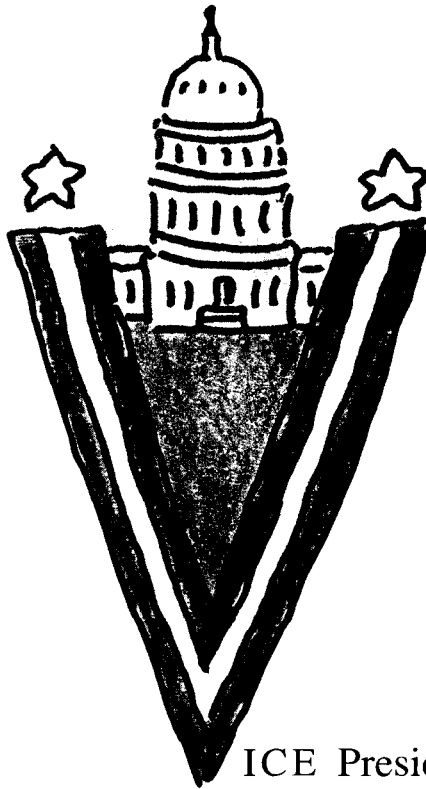
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Really Reinventing Government

by PETER F. DRUCKER

*Both parties promise to reinvent government.
We asked the father of corporate restructuring to show them how*



ICE President Al Gore's promise to "reinvent government," proclaimed with great fanfare in the first year of the Clinton Administration, produced only a nationwide yawn. (The similar promise made in the Republicans' "Contract With America," last year, initially met with no better response.) There has been no lack of publicity about the Gore initiative since. Press release after press release has announced the reinvention of yet another agency or program; big conferences, one chaired by the President himself, have

been convened, and any number of TV appearances made. Of all the domestic programs of the Clinton Administration, this is one of the few in which there actually have been results and not just speeches. Yet neither the public nor the media have shown much interest. And last November's elections were hardly a vote of confidence in the Administration's performance at reinventing government.

There are good reasons for this. In any institution other than the federal government, the changes being trumpeted as reinventions would not even be announced, except perhaps on the bulletin board in the hallway. They are the kinds of things that a hospital expects floor nurses to do on their own; that a bank expects branch managers to do on their own; that even a poorly run manufacturer expects supervisors to do on their own—without getting much praise, let alone any extra rewards.

Here are some examples—sadly, fairly typical ones:

- In Atlanta, Georgia, six separate welfare programs, each traditionally with its own office and staff, have consolidated their application process to give “one-stop service.” The reinvented program is actually getting phone calls answered, and on the first try.
- In Ogden, Utah, and Oakland, California, among other places, the Internal Revenue Service is also experimenting with treating the taxpayers as customers and with one-stop service, in which each clerk, instead of shuffling taxpayers from one office to another, has the information to answer their questions.
- The Export-Import Bank has been reinvented. It is now expected to do what it was set up to do all of sixty years ago: help small businesses get export financing.
- The U.S. Geological Survey office in Denver is supposed to



sell maps of the United States to the public. But it is almost impossible to find out what maps to order and how and where to order them, since the catalogue is carefully hidden. And the very fact that a map is in demand by the public all but guarantees that it will be unobtainable. It cannot be reprinted simply because the public wants to buy it; another government agency must order it for internal use. If the map sells well, it therefore immediately goes out of print. What's more, the warehouse is so poorly lit that when an order for a map in print comes in, the clerks cannot find it. The task force that the Geological Survey created seven months ago to reinvent all this has succeeded so far in putting more lights in the warehouse and making a few other minor improvements.

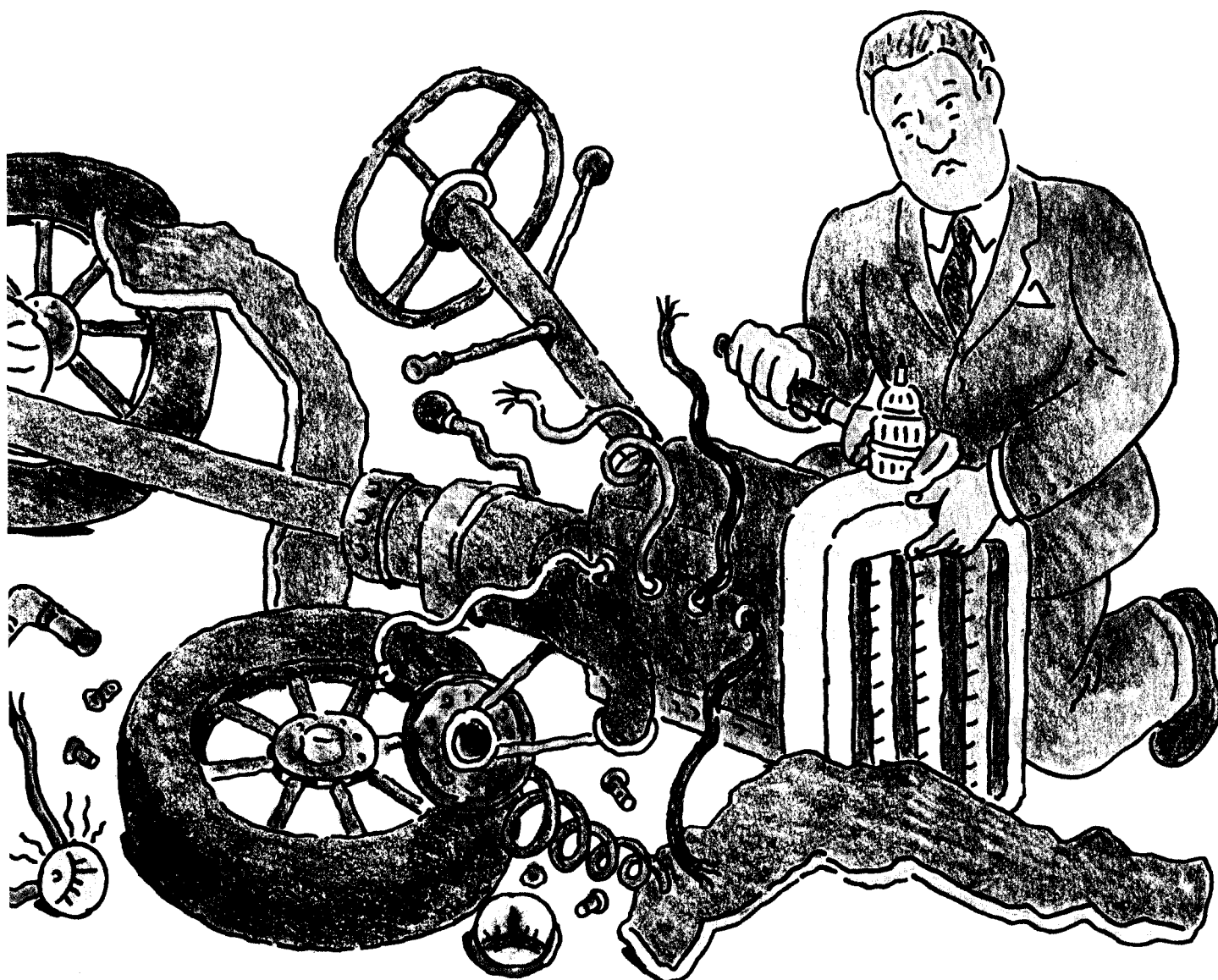
For the future, however, more-ambitious things are promised:

- The Department of Agriculture proposes to trim its agen-

cies from forty-two to thirty, to close more than 1,000 field offices, and to eliminate 11,000 jobs, for savings of about \$3.6 billion over five years.

- Of the 384 recommendations of ways to reinvent government identified by the Vice President in 1993, about half are being proposed in the budget for fiscal year 1995. If all these recommendations are accepted by Congress, they should result in savings of about \$12.5 billion over two years.

But neither the trimming of the Department of Agriculture nor the Vice President's 384 recommendations are new. We have long known that a great many agricultural field offices are in cities and suburbs where few if any farmers are left. Closing them was first proposed in the Eisenhower years. And a good many, perhaps the majority, of Gore's 384 recommendations were made ten years ago, in the Grace Report, under President Ronald Reagan.



Nor is it by any means sure that all of these proposals and recommendations will become law. Mike Espy unveiled large cuts in the bloated USDA on December 6. But he had announced in October that he would be resigning effective December 31, and there is no guarantee that there will be someone at the top of the department committed to presiding over these changes.

Even if all of these proposals were to be enacted, the results would be trivial. The proposed Agriculture Department saving of \$3.6 billion over five years works out to about \$720 million a year—or around one percent of the annual department budget of almost \$70 billion. A saving of \$12.5 billion looks like a lot of money. But over two years the federal government spends \$3 trillion. An annual saving of \$6 billion—and this is many times more than Congress is likely to accept—would thus be a cut of no more than two tenths of one percent of the budget. Surely the only way to describe the results of Gore's efforts so far is with the old Latin tag "The mountains convulsed in labor only to give birth to a ridiculous, teensy-weensy Mouse."

Restructuring

THE reason most often given for this embarrassment of nonresults is "resistance by the bureaucracy." Of course, no one likes to be reinvented by fiat from above. But actually, one positive result of Gore's program has been the enthusiastic support it has received from a great many people in the government's employ—especially the low-level people who are in daily contact with the public and are thus constantly frustrated by red tape and by such inane rules as the one that prevents their selling the beautiful Geological Survey maps, of which they are justly proud.

Nor is lack of effort the explanation. Some of the most dedicated people in Washington meet week after week to produce these embarrassing nonresults. They include the deputy secretaries of the major government departments. Vice President Gore—an unusually energetic man—pushes and pushes. And the driving force behind the whole endeavor is the most knowledgeable of all Washington insiders, Alice Rivlin, formerly the director of the Congressional Budget Office, and now the director of the Office of Management and Budget.

These able people are getting nowhere fast because their basic approach is wrong. They are trying to patch and to spot-weld, here, there, and yonder—and that never accomplishes anything. There will be no results unless there is a radical change in the way the federal government and its agencies are managed and paid. The habit of continuous improvement has to be built into all government agencies, and has to be made self-sustaining.

Continuous improvement is considered a recent Japanese invention—the Japanese call it *kaizen*. But in fact it was used almost eighty years ago, and in the United States. From the First World War until the early eighties, when it was dissolved,

the Bell Telephone System applied "continuous improvement" to every one of its activities and processes, whether that was installing a telephone in a home or manufacturing switch gear. For every one of these activities Bell defined results, performance, quality, and cost. And for every one it set an annual improvement goal. Bell managers weren't rewarded for reaching these goals, but those who did not reach them were out of the running and rarely given a second chance.

What is equally needed—and is also an old Bell Telephone invention—is "benchmarking": every year comparing the performance of an operation or an agency with the performances of all others, with the best becoming the standard to be met by all the following year.

Continuous improvement and benchmarking are largely unknown in civilian agencies of the U.S. government. They would require radical changes in policies and practices which the bureaucracy, the federal employees' unions, and Congress would all fiercely resist. They would require every agency—and every bureau within it—to define its performance objective, its quality objective, and its cost objective. They would require defining the results that the agency is supposed to produce. However, continuous improvement and benchmarking need different incentives. An agency that did not improve its performance by a preset minimum would have its budget cut. And a manager whose unit consistently fell below the benchmark set by the best performers would be penalized in terms of compensation or—more effective—in terms of eligibility for promotion. Nonperformers would ultimately be demoted or fired.

But not even such changes, though they would be considered radical by almost anybody in Congress or the federal bureaucracy, would warrant being called a reinvention of government. Things that should not be done at all are always mishandled the worst—and thus here we see the greatest improvements when attempts are made to do better what is already being done.

Any organization, whether biological or social, needs to change its basic structure if it significantly changes its size. Any organization that doubles or triples in size needs to be *restructured*. Similarly, any organization, whether a business, a nonprofit, or a government agency, needs to rethink itself once it is more than forty or fifty years old. It has outgrown its policies and its rules of behavior. If it continues in its old ways, it becomes ungovernable, unmanageable, uncontrollable.

The civilian part of the U.S. government has outgrown its size and outlived its policies. It is now far larger than it was during the Eisenhower Administration. Its structure, its policies, and its rules for doing government business and for managing people go back even further than that. They were first developed under William McKinley after 1896, and were pretty much completed under Herbert Hoover from 1929 to 1933.

In fact there is no point in blaming this or that President for the total disarray of our government today. It is the fault



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neither of the Democrats nor of the Republicans. Government has outgrown the structure, the policies, and the rules designed for it and still in use.

Rethinking

THE first reaction in a situation of disarray is always to do what Vice President Gore and his associates are now doing—patching. It always fails. The next step is to rush into downsizing. Management picks up a meat-ax and lays about itself indiscriminately. This is what the Republicans and (as of last December) President Clinton now promise. In the past fifteen years one big American company after another has done this—among them IBM, Sears, and GM. Each first announced that laying off 10,000 or 20,000 or even 50,000 people would lead to an immediate turnaround. A year later there had, of course, been no turnaround, and the company laid off another 10,000 or 20,000 or 50,000—again without results. In many if not most cases, downsizing has turned out to be something that surgeons for centuries have warned against: “amputation before diagnosis.” The result is always a casualty.

But there have been a few organizations—some large companies (GE, for instance) and a few large hospitals (Beth Israel in Boston, for instance)—that, without fanfare, did turn themselves around, by *rethinking* themselves. They did not start out by downsizing. In fact, they knew that the way to get control of costs is not to start by reducing expenditures but to identify the activities that are productive, that should be strengthened, promoted, and expanded. Every agency, every policy, every program, every activity, should be confronted with these questions: “What is your mission?” “Is it still the right mission?” “Is it still worth doing?” “If we were not already doing this, would we now go into it?” This questioning has been done often enough in all kinds of organizations—businesses, hospitals, churches, and even local governments—that we know it works.

The overall answer is almost never “This is fine as it stands; let’s keep on.” But in some—indeed, a good many—areas the answer to the last question is “Yes, we would go into this again, but with some changes. We have learned a few things.”

An example might be the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, created in 1970. Safety in the workplace is surely the right mission for OSHA. But safety in the

GREEN FIELDS

By this part of the century few are left who believe
in the animals for they are not there in the carved parts
of them served on plates and the pleas from the slatted trucks
are sounds of shadows that possess no future
there is still game for the pleasure of killing
and there are pets for the children but the lives that followed
courses of their own other than ours and older
have been migrating before us some are already
far on the way and yet Peter with his gaunt cheeks
and point of white beard the face of an aged Lawrence
Peter who had lived on from another time and country
and who had seen so many things set out and vanish
still believed in heaven and said he had never once
doubted it since his childhood on the farm in the days
of the horses he had not doubted it in the worst
times of the Great War and afterward and he had come
to what he took to be a kind of earthly
model of it as he wandered south in his sixties
by that time speaking the language well enough
for them to make him out he took the smallest roads
into a world he thought was a thing of the past
with wildflowers he scarcely remembered and neighbors

working together scything the morning meadows
turning the hay before the noon meal bringing it in
by milking time husbandry and abundance
all the virtues he admired and their reward bounteous
in the eyes of a foreigner and there he remained
for the rest of his days seeing what he wanted to see
until the winter when he could no longer fork
the earth in his garden and then he gave away
his house land everything and committed himself
to a home to die in an old chateau where he lingered
for some time surrounded by those who had lost
the use of body or mind and as he lay there he told me
that the wall by his bed opened almost every day
and he saw what was really there and it was eternal life
as he recognized at once when he saw the gardens
he had made and the green fields where he had been
a child and his mother was standing there then the wall would close
and around him again were the last days of the world

—W. S. MERWIN



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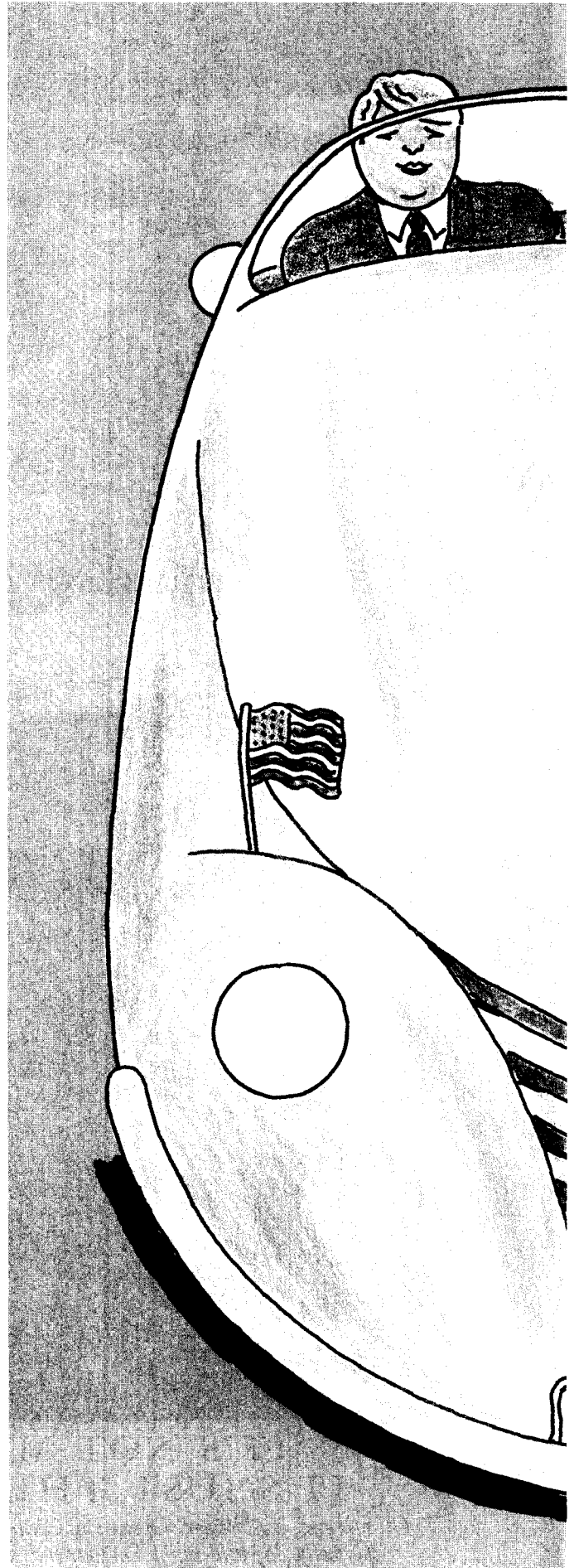
American workplace has not improved greatly in the past twenty-five years. There may be slightly fewer disabling injuries now than there were in 1960 or 1970, and to be sure, the work force has increased tremendously over those years. But considering the steady shift of the labor force from highly unsafe to fairly safe work (for example, from deep-level coal mining to the safer surface strip mining, and especially the shift from inherently dangerous manufacturing jobs to inherently safe office and service jobs), safety in the American workplace may actually have deteriorated since 1970. Such a result may mean that we have been going about the task in the wrong way. In OSHA's case we actually understand the problem. OSHA runs on the assumption that an unsafe environment is the primary cause of accidents, and it therefore tries to do the impossible: create a risk-free universe. Of course eliminating safety hazards is the right thing to do. But it is only one part of safety, and probably the lesser part. In fact, by itself it achieves next to nothing. The most effective way to produce safety is to eliminate unsafe behavior. OSHA's definition of an accident—"when someone gets hurt"—is inadequate. To cut down on accidents the definition has to be "a violation of the rules of safe behavior, whether anyone gets hurt or not." This is the definition under which the United States has been running its nuclear submarines. Anyone in a nuclear sub, whether the commanding officer or the most junior seaman, is punished for the slightest violation of the rules of safe behavior, even if no one gets hurt. As a result, the nuclear submarine has a safety record unmatched by any industrial plant or military installation in the world; and yet a more unsafe environment than a crowded nuclear sub can hardly be imagined.

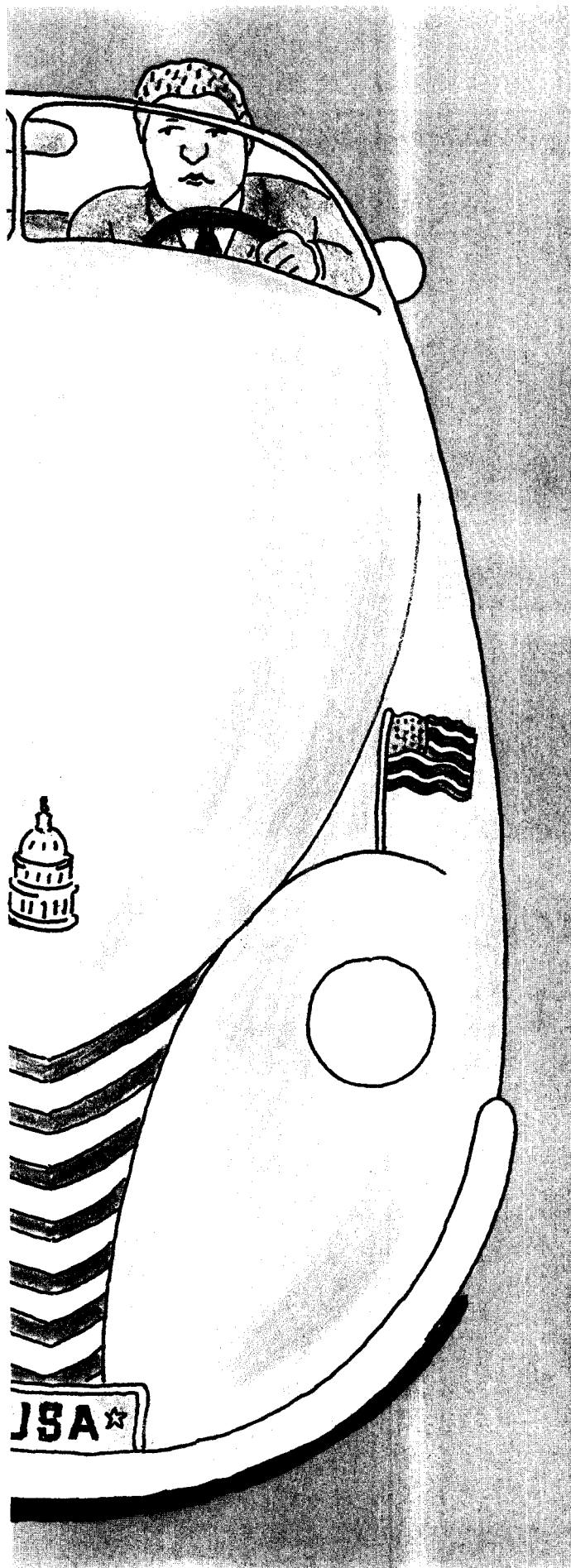
OSHA's program should, of course, be maintained, and perhaps even expanded. But it needs to be refocused.

This analysis will consider a number of agencies whose mission is no longer viable, if it ever was—agencies that we would definitely not start now if we had the choice.

The mission may have been accomplished, for instance. An example is that most sacred of cows, the Veterans Administration's 171 hospitals and 130 nursing homes. When they first became accredited hospitals, around 1930, competent hospitals were scarce in the rural areas and small towns where many veterans lived. Today a competent hospital is easily accessible to a veteran almost anywhere. Medically, most VA hospitals are at best mediocre; financially, they are costly to the government. Worst, they are not neighborhood facilities, and thus veterans—especially elderly, chronically ill ones—sometimes have to travel far from their communities and their families just when they most need community and family support. The VA hospitals and nursing homes long ago accomplished what they were set up to do. They should be closed and the job contracted out to local hospitals and HMOs.

Or there may be no mission left. For example, would we





now establish a separate Department of Agriculture? A good many Americans would answer with a loud no. Now that farmers are no more than three percent of the population, and productive farmers are half that (and “agribusinesses” to boot), a bureau at Commerce or Labor is probably all we need.

Some perfectly respectable activities belong elsewhere. Why, for instance, should a scientific agency like the Geological Survey run a retail business? Surely there are enough businesses around, map stores or book chains, to sell its maps. Or they could be offered in the catalogues of firms that sell outdoor gear.

Continuing with activities that we would not now choose to begin is wasteful. They should be abandoned. One cannot even guess how many government activities would be found to be worth preserving. But my experience with many organizations suggests that the public would vote against continuing something like two fifths, if not half, of all civilian agencies and programs. And almost none of them would win a vote—that is, be deemed to be properly organized and operating well—by a large margin.

Abandoning

TOGETHER the qualified yea votes and nays are likely to be awarded in any organization to some three fifths or two thirds of programs and activities. The thorny cases are the programs and activities that are unproductive or counterproductive without our quite knowing what is wrong, let alone how to straighten it out.

Two major and highly cherished U.S. government programs belong in this category. The welfare program is one highly visible example. When it was designed, in the late 1930s, it worked beautifully. But the needs it then tackled were different from those it is supposed to serve today: the needs of unwed mothers and fatherless children, of people without education, skills, or work experience. Whether it actually does harm is hotly debated. But few claim that it works or that it even alleviates the social ills it is supposed to cure.

And then there is that mainstay of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War years: military aid. If it is given to an ally who is actually engaged in fighting, military aid can be highly productive: consider Lend-Lease to Great Britain in 1940–1941, and military aid to an embattled Israel. But military aid is counterproductive if it is given in peacetime to *create* an ally—a principle that Plutarch and Suetonius accepted as proved. Surely our worst recent foreign-policy messes—Panama, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia are prime examples—were caused by our giving military aid to create an ally. Little, if any, military aid since the beginning of the Cold War has actually produced an ally. Indeed, it usually produced an enemy—as did Soviet military aid to Afghanistan.

The favorite prescription for such programs or activities is to reform them. President Clinton’s welfare reform is one example, as is the welfare reform proposed by the new Re-



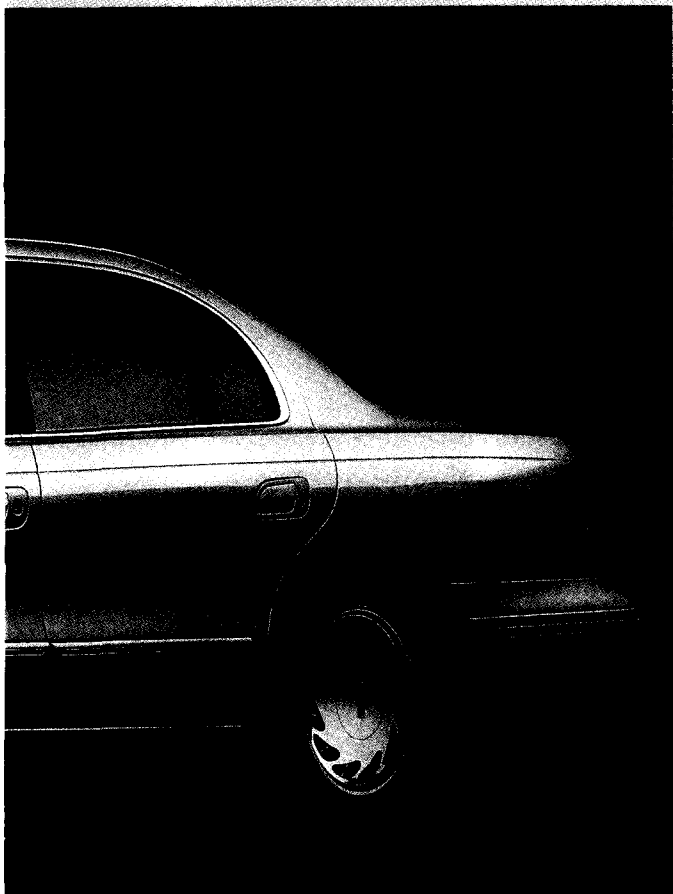
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publican majority. Both are quackery. To reform something that malfunctions—let alone something that does harm—without knowing why it does not work can only make things worse. The best thing to do with such programs is to abolish them.

Maybe we should run a few—a very few—controlled experiments. In welfare, for instance, we might try, in some carefully chosen places across the country, to privatize retraining and placing long-term welfare recipients. Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith has achieved promising results in this area. In health care we might try several different approaches in different states: for example, managed competition in California, home of the strong and experienced health-care wholesaler Kaiser Permanente; single-payer health care on the Canadian model in New Jersey, where there has been support for it; and in Oregon rationing on the basis of medical expectations, which is now being tried for the care of indigents.

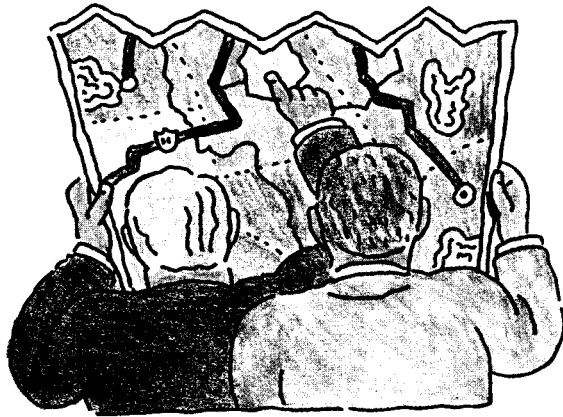
But in areas where there are no successes to be tested—for example, military aid—we should not even experiment. There are no hypotheses to test. We should abandon.

Rethinking will result in a list, with activities and programs that should be strengthened at the top, ones that

An Exception for Crusades

ANYONE who has read this far will exclaim, “Impossible. Surely no group of people will ever agree on what belongs at the top of the list and what at the bottom.” But, amazingly enough, wherever rethinking has been done, there has been substantial agreement about the list, whatever the backgrounds or the beliefs of the people involved. The disagreements are rarely over what should be kept or strengthened and what should be abandoned. They are usually over whether a program or activity should be axed right away or put on probation for two or three years. The programs that people do not agree on are the ones concerned not with results but with “moral imperatives.”

The best American example is the war on drugs. After many years it has had little effect on substance abuse and addiction, and much of the effect it has had is deleterious. But it underlies the destruction of our cities in that addicts are prostituting themselves, mugging, robbing, or killing to earn enough for the fix that the war on drugs has made prohibitively expensive. All the war on drugs is actually doing, in other words, is enriching drug dealers and penalizing and ter-



Every agency should be confronted with these questions: “What is your mission?” “Is it still worth doing?” “If we were not already doing this, would we now go into it?”

should be abolished at the bottom, and between them activities that need to be refocused or in which a few hypotheses might be tested. Some activities and programs should, despite an absence of results, be given a grace period of a few years before they are put out of their misery. Welfare may be the prime example.

Rethinking is not primarily concerned with cutting expenses. It leads above all to a tremendous increase in performance, in quality, in service. But substantial cost savings—sometimes as much as 40 percent of the total—always emerge as a by-product. In fact, rethinking could produce enough savings to eliminate the federal deficit within a few years. The main result, however, would be a change in basic approach. For where conventional policymaking ranks programs and activities according to their good intentions, rethinking ranks them according to results.

rorizing nonusers, especially in the inner city. But the war on drugs is a crusade. What lies behind it is not logic but outrage. Stopping it, no matter how beneficial, would be “immoral.” The smart thing to do is to exclude such crusades from the rational analysis involved in rethinking. Fortunately, there are never a lot of them. As for the rest—more than 90 percent of all programs and activities—rethinking will in all probability produce substantial agreement.

Effective Government

SURELY, it will be argued, even total agreement among highly respected people will be futile. Congress will not accept anything like this. Neither will the bureaucracy. And lobbyists and special interests of all persuasions will be united in opposition to anything so subversive.

Perfectly true: action on rethinking is impossible today. But will it be impossible tomorrow? In the last presidential election almost one fifth of the electorate voted for Ross Perot, the man who promised to get rid of the deficit by slashing government expenditures. A substantial number—perhaps another fifth—agreed with his aims even though they could not bring themselves to vote for him. Just now the federal deficit is declining. But even without health-care reform or welfare reform the deficit will again grow explosively, at the latest by 1997. And then the demand for cutting the deficit may become irresistible and overwhelm Congress, the bureaucracy, and the lobbyists. If no rational rethinking of government performance has yet occurred, we will in all likelihood do what so many large companies have done—apply the meat-ax and downsize. We will then destroy performance, but without decreasing the deficit. In fact, it is predictable that the wrong things will then be cut—the things that perform and should be strengthened.

But if we have a plan that shows how and where the government needs to be rethought, we have a chance. In a crisis one turns to people who have thought through in advance what needs to be done. Of course, no plan, no matter how well thought through, will ever be carried out as written. Even a dictator has to make compromises. But such a plan would serve as the ideal against which the compromises were measured. It might save us from sacrificing things that should be strengthened in order to maintain the obsolete and the unproductive. It would not guarantee that all—or even most—of the unproductive things would be cut, but it might maintain the productive ones. Within a few years we are likely to face such a crisis, as the federal budget and the federal deficit resume explosive growth while taxpayers grow ever more resistant to tax increases and ever more contemptuous of government and its promises.

In fact, we may already be very close to having to reinvent government. The theory on which all governments in the developed world have operated at least since the Great Depression (Harry Hopkins, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's adviser, called it "Tax and Tax, Spend and Spend") no longer delivers results. It no longer even delivers votes. The "nanny state"—a lovely English term—is a total failure. Government everywhere—in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the former Soviet Union—has been proved unable to run community and society. And everywhere voters revolt against the nanny state's futility, bureaucracy, and burdens. The landslide in which California's voters last November enacted Proposition 187, abolishing health care and even free public education for illegal immigrants, is but one example. But the countertheory that preaches a return to pre-First World War government has also not proved out—the theory that was first formulated in 1944 in Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, and that culminated in neo-conservatism. Despite its ascendancy in the 1980s, despite Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the nanny state has not shrunk. On

the contrary, it is growing ever faster. As the new Republican majority is soon going to find out, neither maintaining nor curtailing the nanny state is acceptable to the public.

Instead we will have to find out what government programs and activities in community and society do serve a purpose. What results should be expected of each? What can governments—federal, state, local—*do* effectively? And what nongovernmental ways are there to do worthwhile things that governments do not and cannot do effectively?

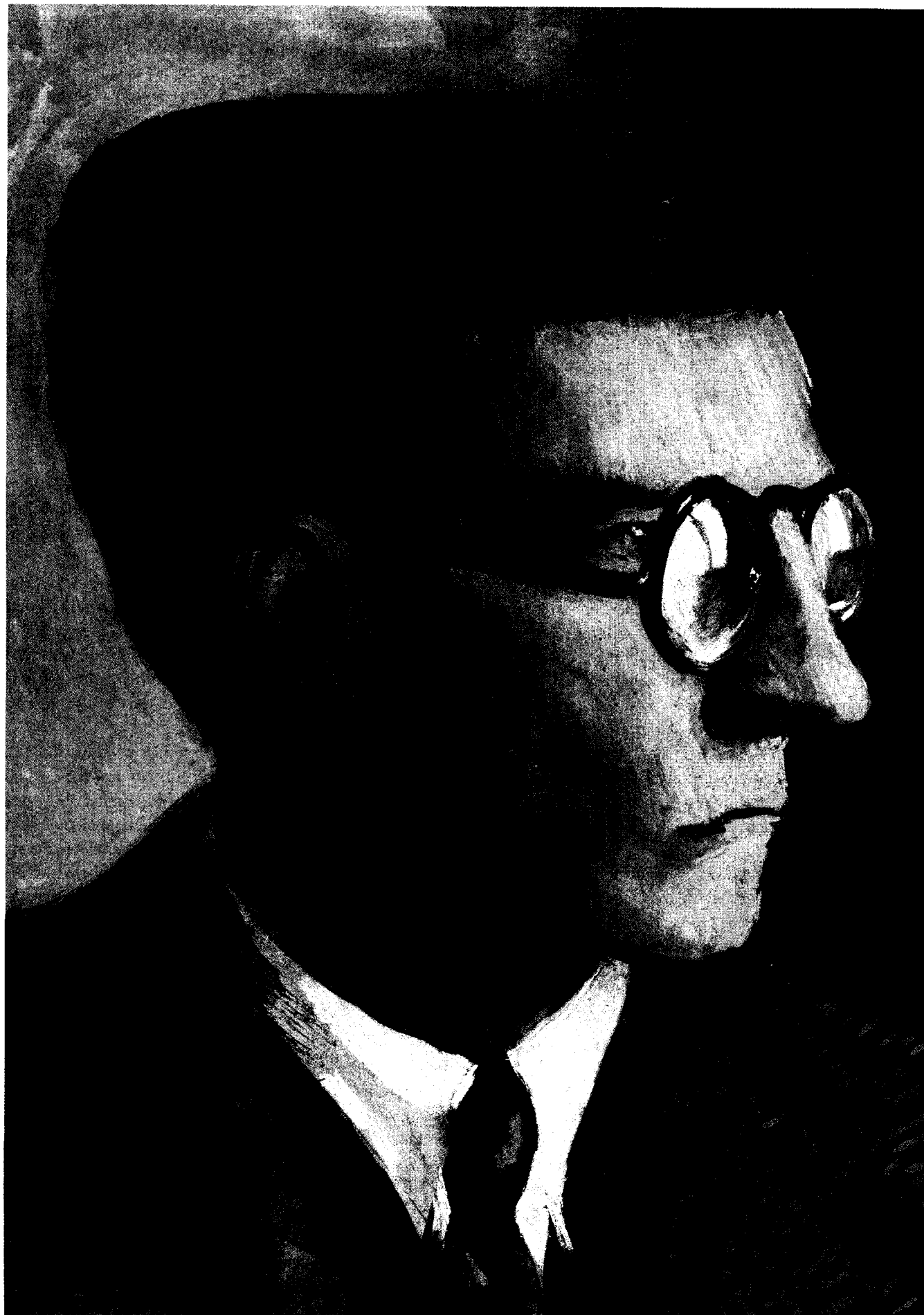
At the same time, as President Clinton learned in his first two years, government cannot opt out of the wider world and become domestic only, as he so very much wanted it to be. Foreign brush fires—in Bosnia, in Rwanda, in the former Soviet Union—have to be attended to, because they have a nasty habit of spreading. And the growing threat of international terrorism, especially if used as a weapon by outlaw governments, will surely require more government involvement in foreign affairs, including military matters, and more international cooperation.

By now it has become clear that a developed country can neither extend big government, as the (so-called) liberals want, nor abolish it and go back to nineteenth-century innocence, as the (so-called) conservatives want. The government we need will have to transcend both groups. The megastate that this century built is bankrupt, morally as well as financially. It has not delivered. But its successor cannot be "small government." There are far too many tasks, domestically and internationally. We need *effective* government—and that is what the voters in all developed countries are actually clamoring for.

For this, however, we need something we do not have: a theory of what government can do. No major political thinker—at least not since Machiavelli, almost 500 years ago—has addressed this question. All political theory, from Locke on through *The Federalist Papers* and down to the articles published by today's liberals and conservatives, deals with the process of government: with constitutions, with power and its limitations, with methods and organizations. None deals with the substance. None asks what the proper functions of government might be and could be. None asks what results government should be held accountable for.

Rethinking government, its programs, its agencies, its activities, would not by itself give us this new political theory. But it would give us the factual information for it. And so much is already clear: the new political theory we badly need will have to rest on an analysis of what does work rather than on good intentions and promises of what should work because we would like it to. Rethinking will not give us the answers, but it might force us to ask the right questions.

Now is the time to start, when polls show that less than a fifth of the American public trusts government to do anything right. Vice President Gore's "reinventing government" is an empty slogan so far. Yet what the slogan implies is what free government needs—and desperately. ☸



Who Was Shostakovich?

by RICHARD TARUSKIN

*To his fellow citizens he was a great artist and a patriot.
In the West he was seen first as an anti-fascist hero, then as a Soviet toady,
and later as a dissident. To critics and musicians he was
either a keeper of the symphonic flame or a clumsy provincial who was debasing
musical values. To our author he is not only the greatest
Soviet composer but the greatest Soviet artist of all, and the creator of what
may turn out to be the twentieth century's most precious
artistic legacy—precisely because his music can never be fully understood*

BEWARE of loving friends. They can be jealous guardians, and in their jealousy they're apt to hurt the one they love. The St. Petersburg theater historian Isaak Glikman's recent edition of Dmitry Shostakovich's letters, the first major post-Soviet contribution to the literature on the greatest of all Soviet artists, overflows with moving—in-
deed, wrenching—revelations. And yet there is—I won't say a flaw, because it arises out of such honorable circumstances—a pervading predicament about its commentaries, and a telling one. In order to protect the memory of his most cherished friend, and to protect what *he* knows to be the meaning of his friend's words, the editor interposed himself often and clumsily (and, alas, familiarly) between the reader and the text.

Glikman's reading was thus an attempt to take possession of the meaning of the text—or perhaps, in his own view, to return possession to the rightful owner. It was an attempt to contain meaning and foreclose interpretation. And in that sense it was an old Soviet habit—or, rather, it was an attempt to fight Soviet methods of appropriation with Soviet methods. What Glikman tried to do is to carry out a sort of preemptive strike not only against the old, opportunistic official view of Shostakovich, to which the reflexes of a lifetime had understandably rendered him permanently sensitive, but also against the equally opportunistic habits of secret nonconformist interpretation in which he knew his readers, in reac-

tion to the very same coercive official construction, had been thoroughly trained.

But the effort to resolve every contradiction and eliminate every ambiguity inevitably produces inconsistencies and contradictions of its own. And the price of certainty is always reduction—reduction not only in meaning but in interest and value. Glikman's presentation of Shostakovich's letters thus crystallizes in a microcosm, and with relatively unproblematic texts, the difficulties and the fascination that have always haunted the experience of Shostakovich's musical works, those vastly problematic texts, and our relationship to them.

The fact is that no one owns the meaning of this music, which has always supported (nay, invited—nay, compelled) multiple opportunistic and contradictory readings, and no one can ever own it. Under the Soviet dispensation, of course, the Party claimed exclusive interpretive rights. Attempts by Solomon Volkov (the author of *Testimony*, the 1979 volume that fraudulently purported to be the composer's memoirs), or Glikman, or anyone else, to return exclusive ownership to the composer are futile at best, dishonest at worst. (The "Shostakovich" to whom ownership is returned is an ex-post-facto construction—as he would remain even if the authenticity of *Testimony* were confirmed—through which latter-day interpreters, potentially including the composer, assert their own authority. Imagine

Edgar Bergen making himself very small and trying to sit on Charlie McCarthy's lap.)

But that hopelessness of final arbitration is precisely what has given the music its enormous social value, its terrific emotional force, and its staying power. No other music—indeed, no other body of texts—so radically forces engagement with the most fundamental issues of interpretation. No other body of texts so compellingly demonstrates that meaning is never wholly immanent but arises out of a process of interaction between subject and object, so that interpretation is never subjective or objective to the total exclusion of the other. And no other body of texts so fully convinces us that the meaning of an art work, indeed of any communication, is never wholly stable but is the product of its history, a history that only begins with its creation. (Otherwise, one could maintain, our national anthem is not a patriotic song but only a drinking song.)

Add to all of this the incredibly high stakes of the creative and interpretive game as played within the frontiers of a brutal political tyranny. Whether viewed internally or externally, whether in terms of their content or of their context, Shostakovich's works are fraught with horrific subtexts that can never be ignored. That is why they have always been, and will always be, objects of furious and manifold contention. We can never merely receive the messages; we are always implicated in their making, and therefore we can never be indifferent to them. It is never just Shostakovich. It is always Shostakovich and us.

MUSIC in the post-Beethovenian symphonic tradition, the tradition of which Shostakovich was perhaps the last great master, was arguably the most potent medium of artistic expression ever devised. It was equipped with a sophisticated and highly ramified practice of melodic elaboration and directed harmony, which enabled it both to forecast and to delay points of melodic and harmonic arrival. Since by means of these techniques it was always portending its own future and recalling its own past, it could be said to possess a powerful internal sign system—an introversive semiotic, Russian formalists would say—that enabled it to represent enormous tensions and cathartic releases that elicited corresponding affective responses in the hearer: responses that were controlled and directed more precisely, hence more powerfully, than those brought about by any other art medium.

At the same time, symphonic music was often laden with “extroversive” symbols and portents as well. By Beethoven's time there were already many conventions for representing the wider world and its contents, all the way from primitive onomatopoeia to subtle “intertextual” allusion. The repertoire of such devices grew rapidly over the next hundred years, with Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich's countryman and predecessor, and Mahler, his most obvious model, making signal contributions to its development. But—and this may be the key to its uncanny efficacy—such music

resolutely eschewed the establishment within itself of any stable code by which its signs were to be read.

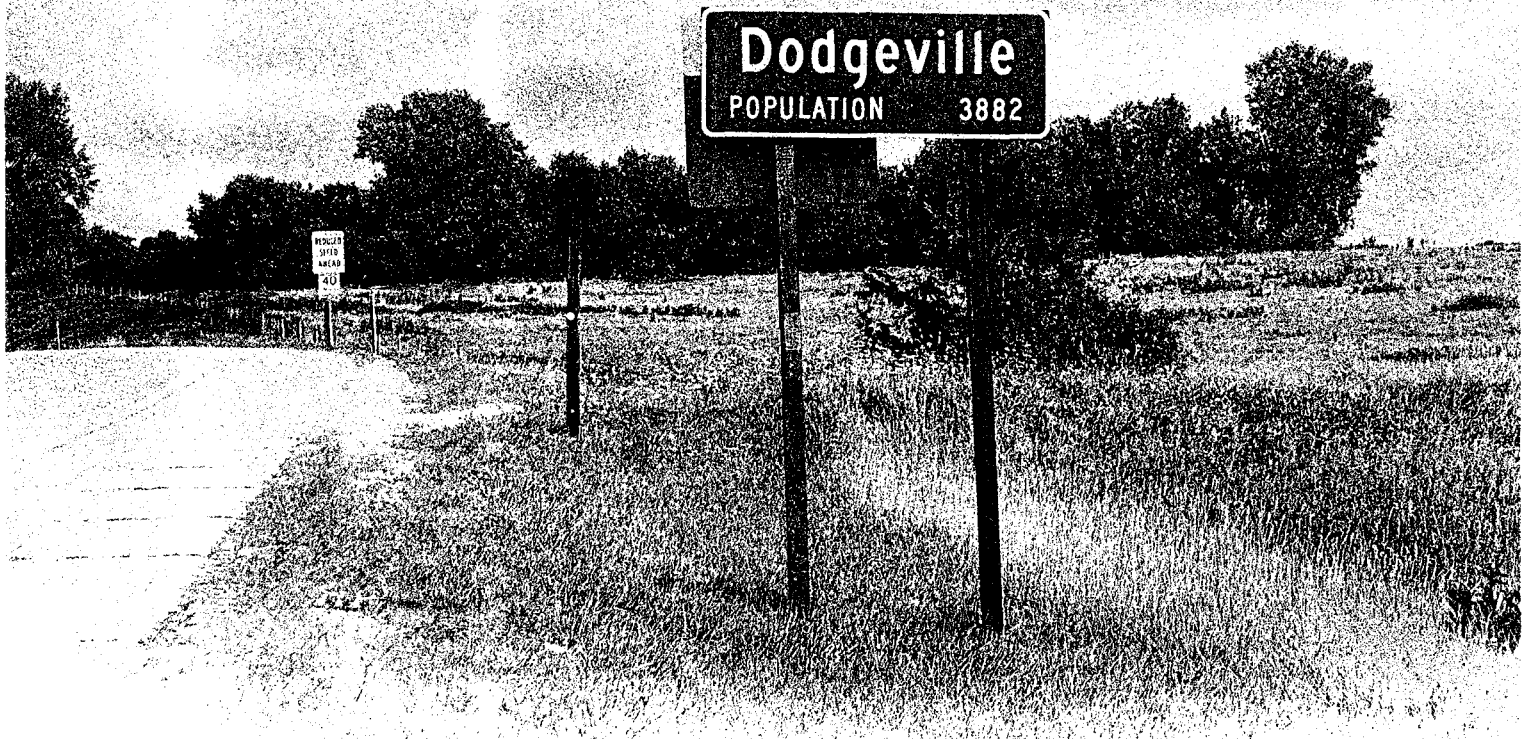
Thus, while its unfolding can simulate the manner and produce the effects of a drama or a narrative, music eludes conclusive paraphrase. Its inescapable assault on the senses and its dynamism, governed by a compelling syntax but unmediated by any established semantic canon, seems to present and to evoke emotional intensity in a primal, inchoate fashion. “Music,” Schopenhauer was prompted thus to write, “is the kernel that precedes all attempts to shape it: it is, that is to say, the heart of things.” Wagner, under its (and Schopenhauer's) spell, called music that fit this description “absolute music,” and the name has stuck. But as originally conceived, the idea of absolute music did not imply abstraction, still less formalism. It meant something uncanny and sublime—something that names no names, and was therefore unattached to objects, but that was supremely attached to subjects, to the point at which it could seem to take over its beholders' sentient lives for the duration, giving knowledge of a reality that went beyond the bounds of the sensory or phenomenal world, into the realm of gnosis or revelatory “intuition.”

What this amounts to, in interpretive terms, is an overwhelmingly fraught surface or manifest content, consisting of the dynamically unfolding sound shapes with all their clamor of introversive and extroversive signification, but a symbology whose referents must be sought in the realm of latent content. This difficulty has given rise to a persistent, heated, and fruitless debate that still rages, on and off, both in and out of the academy. On the one hand are those who would prefer to simplify matters, denying the very existence of a latent content and claiming for music the status of an inherently or ideally nonreferential medium, unattached to the wider world and beatifically exempt from its vicissitudes. Their outstanding nineteenth-century spokesman was Eduard Hanslick, on whom Wagner modeled the figure of Beckmesser, the eternal pedant in *Die Meistersinger*. The outstanding twentieth-century representative of this position was an uprooted Russian nobleman and White émigré named Igor Stravinsky, and in so identifying him I have identified the motivation for his aesthetic stance. In retrospect it seems only predictable that the autonomist or formalist position should have achieved its completest ascendancy in the West during the Cold War.

On the other hand are those who not only acknowledge the immanence of a latent musical content but seek, or presume, to define it, to fix it, to make it manifest, to have it name names and propound propositions, to subject it to paraphrase, which means subjecting it to limitation and ultimately to control. It is not difficult to see the political subtext that informs this debate, or why the so-called referentialist side of the argument should have reached ascendancy in the twentieth-century totalitarian states at the same time that the autonomist position triumphed in the liberal democracies.

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The position that would eliminate a whole level of meaning from music impoverishes it literally and obviously. Yet the other side is hardly better. When fixed and paraphrased, the latent becomes blatant. And when the latent becomes wholly manifest, the manifest becomes superfluous.

Where latent musical meaning is neither negated nor successfully administered—where, in other words, it is acknowledged but contested—the value of its vessel is much enhanced. Nietzsche grasped this truth better than anyone when he wrote, “Music reaches its high-water mark only among men who have not the ability or the right to argue.” The whole history of the arts in Russia (not just the Soviet Union), and the whole story of Shostakovich’s life, are encapsulated in that sentence. In few countries have the arts ever mattered so much, and in few countries have they been subjected to more terrible stress, to a more terrible contest for ownership. As the pre-eminent modern master of the post-Beethovenian rhetoric (a rhetoric that declined in the West as the autonomist aesthetic triumphed), Shostakovich was willy-nilly the most important artist in the country where the arts were most important—and the most watchdogged, precisely because his was the medium with the most potential slippage between its manifest and its latent content. Because of this, Shostakovich was the one and only Soviet artist to be claimed equally by the official culture and the dissident culture.

He managed this feat, of course, by leaving interpretation to others. Not explaining his music—or any music—except under public pressure, in the vaguest terms, became the Shostakovich defense, and a rule that he even carried over into his private life. That his letters to Glikman contained little about his music beyond what Glikman calls “statistics”—number of movements, timings, keys—might have been expected; Soviet letters, after all, were public documents whether or not they were published. But he was just as tight-lipped in conversation. A much-repeated anecdote (prized because it brings together two leading figures whose meetings were few) reproduces some summer shop talk between Prokofiev and Shostakovich, overheard by the musicologist Grigoriy Shneyerson at Ivanovo, the Composers’ Union retreat, immediately after the war.

Prokofiev: You know, I’m really going to get down to work on my Sixth Symphony. I’ve written the first movement [here follows a detailed description of its form], and now I’m writing the second, with three themes; the third movement will probably be in sonata form. I feel the need to compensate for the absence of sonata form in the previous movements.

Shostakovich: So, is the weather here always like this?

The later portions of Glikman’s book, given over to a Boswellian or Robert Crafty chronicle of Shostakovich’s last years, show the composer growing more and more noncommittal even as circumstances seemed to favor the lowering of

his guard. On February 24, 1975, less than half a year before his death, having listened to a symphony by his former pupil Boris Tishchenko and said little, Shostakovich offered a sort of apology that might be taken as his Aesopian credo.

I am generally closemouthed. I have neither the wish nor the ability to analyze or discuss the pieces I hear. I just listen to the music people give me to listen to. Either I like it or I don’t. That’s all.

Well, that’s not quite all. There is more here than the doer’s quarrel with the talker, more than the artist’s familiar insistence on sensory immediacy and pleasure over secondary, rationalized response—though in this overanalytical age of ours that’s a hint we might do well to consider at times. There is simply too much in Shostakovich’s instrumental music that is strongly marked—too much that resonates, like Beethoven’s or Tchaikovsky’s music, with characteristic and functional genres, with the conventional iconicity of emotion, with intertextual allusion, with sheer violence—for us to doubt that at bottom he shared his society’s faith in the reality of the latent content. Yet unlike the socialist-realist critics who tried to catalogue and thus circumscribe his “imagery” and “intonations,” and unlike the more recent biographical paraphrasts (including the one who scandalously appropriates his name), Shostakovich insisted on keeping the latent content latent—and keeping it labile.

THE thickest aura and the loudest Babel—a true international Babel, in many tongues—have surrounded the Seventh (*Leningrad*) Symphony ever since the composer’s autograph score was microfilmed and flown to New York via Tehran and Cairo in a great fever of war-hysterical publicity, for performance under Arturo Toscanini. (That autograph has been recently issued in facsimile by a Japanese publisher, with a provocative introductory note by Manashir Yakubov, the archivist of the Shostakovich family estate.) Toscanini’s performance was broadcast on July 19, 1942, to an audience of millions, including Mr. and Mrs. Stravinsky of Hollywood, who, we learn from Mrs. Stravinsky’s posthumously published diary, stayed home in order to listen in.

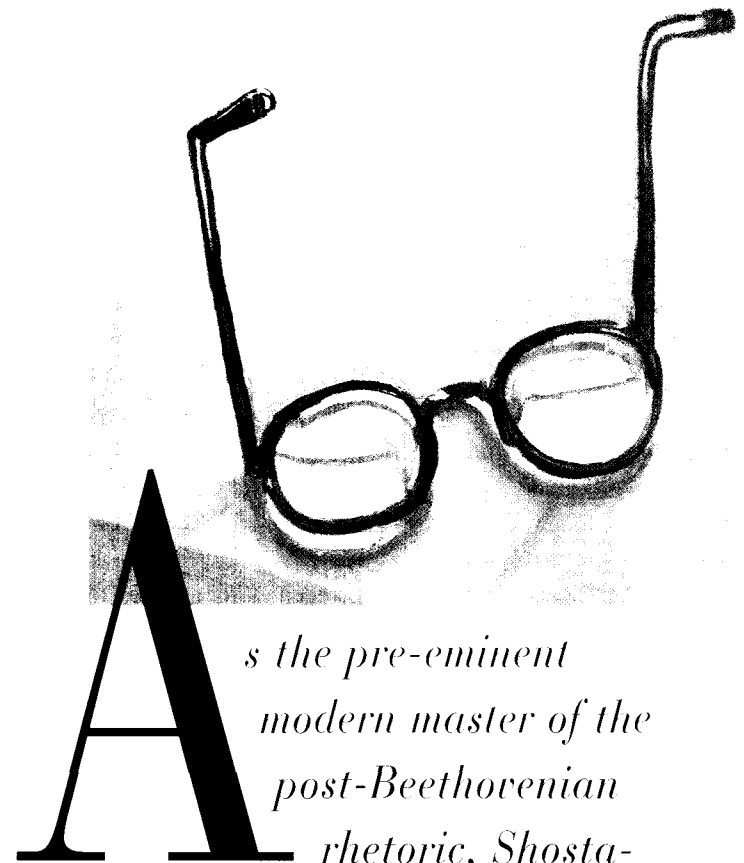
Aura attached in those days far more to the work and its circumstances than to the composer’s person. As Toscanini put it in a letter to Leopold Stokowski, whom he had to fight for first-performance rights, “I admire Shostakovich music but I don’t feel such a frenzied love for it like you.” Stravinsky’s regard for Shostakovich likewise fell short of frenzied love, as he lost no opportunity to remind his legions of interlocutors. Yet the very fact that a composer of Stravinsky’s stature felt compelled to position himself insistently and repeatedly vis-à-vis a composer universally accorded a lesser stature during Stravinsky’s lifetime already suggests something of Shostakovich’s emblematic status. Nor was Bartók immune—else why should he have been so enraged by the Seventh Symphony that he went to the trouble of parodying

its notorious “invasion” theme? (There really can be no doubt that he did so, despite the wan claim, made on Bartók’s behalf by fellow Hungarians, that he was quoting “Da geh’ ich zu Maxim” from Lehár’s *Merry Widow*, the tune that may in fact have served as Shostakovich’s model for caricaturing the Nazis. The passages in question, from Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra, are in Shostakovich’s key, not Lehár’s, and follow Shostakovich’s exact note sequence.) What has made both composer and symphony into icons, and the symphony from the very first (though there has been little agreement as to what it is an icon of), is the way their careers have forced critical confrontation with so many cherished assumptions about art music, its values, and its relationship to the world.

Shostakovich, by turns abused and adulated by a totalitarian state to a degree that lies, at both extremes, beyond the power of his benignly neglected Western counterparts to imagine, was in the 1940s a vastly ambivalent emblem. Was he toady or victim? Secret voice of conscience or accomplice to deception? Nation’s darling or Party-propped demagogue? Keeper of the Beethovenian flame or cynical manipulator of clichés? He aroused pity and annoyance, envy and condescension, admiration and scorn—but never inhabited the limbo of public disregard that has by and large been the fate of the modernist generations in the West. He lacked the freedoms of his counterparts in laissez-faire states, including the freedom to be indifferent and the freedom to be marginal. He accepted the civic obligations that were thrust upon him and the rewards that followed.

While now it is easy enough to see that he had little say in the matter, in the 1940s this was not so clear. Arnold Schoenberg (again: what compelled his avid notice?) reproached Shostakovich for having “allowed politics to influence his compositorial style,” finally exonerating him on terms that today can only seem callous: “Heroes can be composers and vice versa, but you cannot require it.” Yet having established which of them was the hero, Schoenberg could allow himself a certain noblesse-oblige generosity toward the Soviet composer which contrasted with Bartók’s and Stravinsky’s furious rejection. Linking Shostakovich with Sibelius, after the habit of contemporary reviewers like Olin Downes (who cried them up) and Virgil Thomson (who cried them down), Schoenberg made a pronouncement—“I feel they have the breath [did he mean breadth?] of symphonists”—that has been pounced upon ever since by writers eager to issue Shostakovich or Sibelius a passport to academic respectability. And yet Shostakovich’s relationship to the public, both at home and abroad, was at once a seeming vindication of the ostensible ideals of socialist realism and a paradigmatic violation of one of Schoenberg’s fundamental postulates: “If it is art, it is not for everybody, and if it is for everybody, it is not art.”

The Seventh brought it all to a head. This hulking programmatic symphony, this bombastic anachronism replete with onomatopoeic battle music and cyclic thematic dra-



*s the pre-eminent
modern master of the
post-Beethovenian
rhetoric, Shostakovich was the most important
artist in the country where the
arts were most important—
and the most watchdogged.*

maturgy, emerged like some sort of woolly mammoth out of the Stalinist deep freeze. Its rhetoric was shamelessly inflated: by a veritable stage band in its outer movements, by a theatrical travesty of Bach in its protracted Adagio (Passion chorales, massed violins soliloquizing a chaconne). Its path to grandiose affirmation opportunistically replayed Beethoven’s Napoleonic scenario. The crass methods by which its message was mongered were an assault on fastidious taste just as brutish as the Nazi assault on Russia—represented by a mind-numbingly repetitive march that, in its slow, inexorable crescendo, brazenly appropriated the surefire formula of Ravel’s *Bolero* (even down to the snare-drum ostinato and surprise modulation at the end). Glikman’s Shostakovich defiantly confirms the resemblance: “I don’t know what will become of this piece,” Glikman reports his friend saying after playing through the newly composed first movement in August of 1941. “Idle critics will surely rebuke me for imitating *Bolero*. Well, let them; that is how I hear the war.”

The war. This debasement of musical values, was being carried out in the name of the same holy humanitarian cause that dominated the daily headlines. Shostakovich’s symphony was riding both cause’s and headlines’ coattails to worldwide acclaim. In fact, it was making headlines of its own. Its

performances, both at home and abroad, were as much political events as musical ones. Was music serving politics or was politics serving music? Was music exploiting politics or was politics exploiting music? Or, worst of all, was the very distinction between the two being undermined?

Toscanini's powerful advocacy of the music was at least partly due to its political implications. "I was deeply taken," he wrote to Stokowski, "by its beauty and its anti-Fascist meanings, and I have to confess to you, by the greatest desire to perform it. Don't you think, my dear Stokowski, it would be very interesting for everybody, and yourself, too, to hear the old Italian conductor (one of the first artists who strenuously fought against Fascism) to play this work of a young Russian anti-Nazi composer." Performing the work, then, would be another anti-fascist credential for a conductor who, in America, was trading heavily on his political commitments. That "extramusical" appeal was accounting for the symphony's success; and that "extramusical" freight was what conditioned not only "the special meaning of this Symphony," as Toscanini called it, and its special privileges, but also its very special blatancy.

Critics took revenge. Virgil Thomson launched his review in the *New York Herald-Tribune* with a really memorable salvo: "Whether one is able to listen without mind-wander-

ing to the Seventh Symphony of Dmitri Shostakovich probably depends on the rapidity of one's musical perceptions. It seems to have been written for the slow-witted, the not very musical and the distracted." And he ended by accusing the composer of cynicism.

That he has so deliberately diluted his matter, adapted it, by both excessive simplification and excessive repetition, to the comprehension of a child of eight, indicates that he is willing to write down to a real or fictitious psychology of mass consumption in a way that may eventually disqualify him for consideration as a serious composer.

B. H. Haggin, less verbally astute but farther out on a limb because he was writing for *The Nation*, then a Stalinist publication, hauled out all his doughtiest pejoratives: derivative, eclectic, unresourceful, crude, pretentious, blatant, banal. What was particularly galling was the barbarization of musical values in the name of humanitarian ones, paradoxically embodied in "an hour-and-a-quarter-long symphony concerned with the struggle and final victory of humanity over barbarism." The Russians, Haggin warned, not very realistically, "can escape this difficulty only by recognizing the unimportance of those external conditions [that is, the unimportance of the war against fascism] in relation to the greatness we are aware of in some music, the importance instead of the composer's personal and musical resources."

Aesthetics were thus pitted irreconcilably against ethics; transcendence against commitment; quality against currency; art for the sake of art against art for the sake of people. For so crystallizing the terms of the endless and fruitless debate, Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony surely deserves its status as icon.

HOWEVER "monologically" Shostakovich's works were read by the regime (to borrow a word from the vocabulary of the Soviet critic Mikhail Bakhtin), however passively the silent composer appeared to acquiesce in the readings thus imposed, and however great the consequent propaganda yield, the regime could never fully ignore the power of music (and Shostakovich's music above all) to harbor a potentially anarchic folk hermeneutics. The issue was finally brought to a head in 1948, during the Zhdanovshchina, the show trials instigated by Andrey Zhdanov, Stalin's cultural watchdog. The Party stooges who were now recruited to vilify Shostakovich—mainly Vladimir Zakharov, the leader of the Pyatnitsky folk choir, who inveighed against Shostakovich at the open hearings, and the composer Marian Koval', who published a series of calumnious articles in the journal *Sovetskaya muzyka*, the organ of the Union of Soviet Composers—did so by attacking the monumental instrumental genres that Shostakovich now employed. The overt, quasi-"Tolstoyan" charge was made against him that such genres, being inaccessible to the broad public and thus elitist, were divisive of society, hence uncommunitarian, hence

CHANGING SEASONS

Of course he stills haunts me.

I never expected him
to jump into his grave that spring,
admitting it was over.

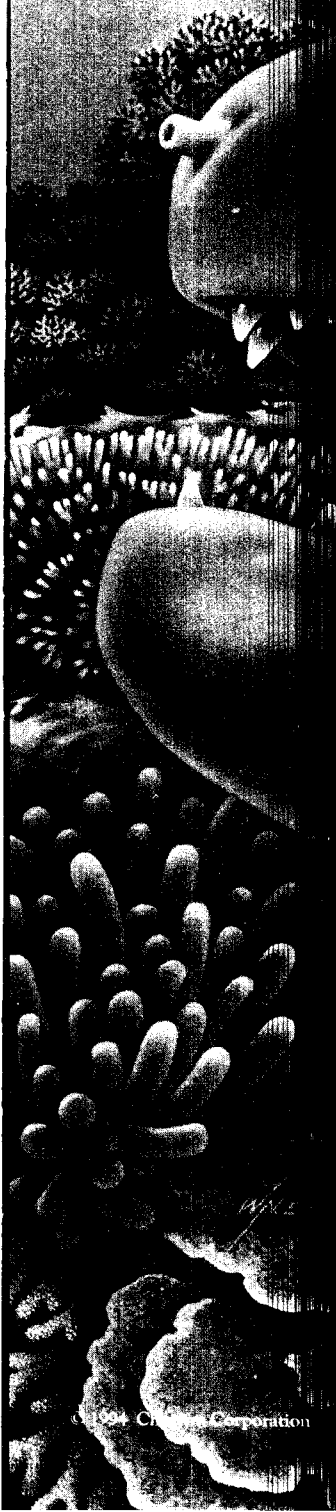
On clear summer mornings
I still see our reflections upon the river
as my fly breaks the smooth surface.

And he walks with me in fall
when I hunt grouse in thick alder,
rifles heavy on our shoulders.

For many years I will find his footprints
in fresh snow and hear him whistle
from across the frozen river.

He was always an impatient brother.

—JOHN E. SMELCER



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anti-Soviet. The covert motive, transparent enough but now documented through the recent efforts of the archivist Leonid Maksimenkov, among others, was to discourage genres that in their wordlessness were less than ideally subject to ideological control. As Maksimenkov writes, “The ideologues from Agitprop demanded texted music, which could be submitted to censorship on a par with movies, literature and programmatic, socialist-realist painting.”

Early drafts of the Central Committee’s Resolution on Music contained explicit formulations designed to render all musical genres safe for censorship—formulations that, had they been published, would have acquired the force of law. One read, “Resolved: to liquidate the one-sided, abnormal deviation in Soviet music towards textless instrumental works.” A revision substituted the somewhat less baleful verb *osudit* (“censure” or “judge unfavorably”) for “liquidate.” One wonders what Shostakovich would have been left with had these passed. In the end, though, the formulation was vague and somewhat absurd; no specific genres were condemned, only the “formalist tendency in Soviet music,” which was “anti-people and conducive in fact to the liquidation of music.” Maksimenkov comments that “the laconicism of the final version of the directive portion of the resolution bears Stalin’s indelible stamp.” It should be added that there was good reason, from the administrative point of view, for imprecision. Specific directives can be complied with. Compliance can be a defense. There can be no defense against the laconic, inscrutable charge of formalism.

So Shostakovich went on writing symphonies and, increasingly, quartets. And they continued to attract ventriloquists from all sides. More and more prevalently, Shostakovich’s post-Zhdanovshchina output was read as so many notes in a bottle. To some extent the works obviously invited such a reading. Many of them contain signals that their latent content is private rather than public. The very shift, beginning in the 1950s, from symphony to quartet as the center of gravity for Shostakovich’s output was such a hint. It was manifestly an anti-Soviet move of a sort, for, as both the Soviet government and its citizens knew long before it became a trendy slogan in the West, the personal is political. To concentrate on chamber music was not just an un-Soviet activity, it was un-Russian. There was never much of a tradition in Russia for chamber music. Under the Soviets it was always vaguely suspect as aristocratic or genteel. The official list of Soviet genres, drawn up for official promulgation in one of the resolution drafts, included symphonic, operatic, song, choral, and dance genres only; the final text specifically rejected all styles and genres that appealed only to “narrow circles of specialists and musical epicures.” No Russian composer before Shostakovich had ever concentrated the way he eventually did on quartets, or written so many of them. (Nikolai Myaskovsky, another prolific composer who was frightened into abstraction, came closest to Shostakovich’s fifteen, with thirteen; but since Myaskovsky wrote twenty-

seven symphonies, the quartets do not bulk nearly as large in his output as they do in Shostakovich’s. Besides, Myaskovsky’s career was practically over by 1948, while most of Shostakovich’s quartet writing lay ahead.)

There are other hints of politically fraught preoccupation with the private and the personal in Shostakovich’s quartets, and in his late music in general. These include slow, ruminative, fading finales and the simulation of recitative (often in a demonstratively broken or halting mode, reminiscent of the end of the funeral march in Beethoven’s *Eroica Symphony*) or, contrariwise, the simulation of voicelessness (the tapping bows in the Thirteenth Quartet) or of screaming (the piercing unison crescendo at the end of the same quartet). The transfer of musical ideas, like the screams, or of whole passages of music, from one work to another, suggesting that different works are chapters in an overarching narrative, also puts us in mind of biography, the most overarching narrative of all. The obsessional quotations and self-quotations add the prefix “auto-” to the biographical gesture.

And, of course, there is the increasingly resolute denial of optimism, of “life affirmation,” which is to say denial of the *sine qua non* of Soviet art. (Here is where the late Shostakovich’s surprising recourse to a few superficial trappings of twelve-tone technique, officially denounced for its decadence and pessimism, seems to find its rationale.) As Shostakovich, a world-renowned and much-revered figure, reached the stricken and debilitated end of his road, and as the Soviet state stumbled toward its own debilitated end, the composer could afford to lessen his guard, if ever so slightly. Whereas in the Yevtushenko-inspired Thirteenth Symphony he was still manifestly wrestling with Soviet authority, in the Fourteenth Symphony, a fully texted and explicit death affirmation, Shostakovich spat in its face. In the Fifteenth Quartet—a racking medley of Adagios—he fashioned his personal pain and his pessimism into a tour de force.

I SPEAK of hints within the works, but they are hints that we read in hindsight, and with ever-increasing knowledge of the events of the composer’s life. Ultimately it is difficult—no, it is impossible—to know whether he is forcing his autobiography on us or we are forcing it on him. We did not need complacent post-structuralists to tell us that autobiography is not just a writerly genre but a way of reading.

The first work of Shostakovich’s to end *morendo*, with the dying of the light, was the Fourth Symphony, on which the composer was at work at the time of his first denunciation, and which was withdrawn before its premiere (we now know) not at Shostakovich’s request but at the bidding of the Composers’ Union leadership. This combination of circumstances made it inevitable that when the symphony was finally performed, twenty-five years later, in 1961, it was received as the composer’s first note in a bottle. Reading the symphony as autobiography reached a predictable height of impertinence (that is, of trivial specificity) with Ian Mac-

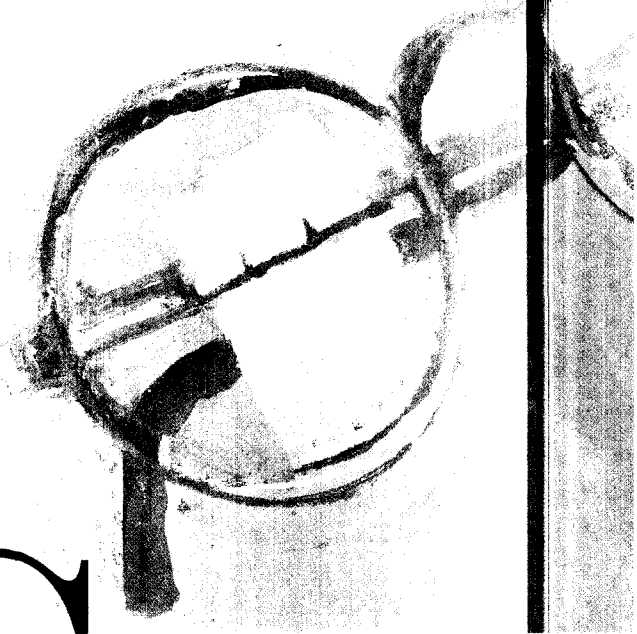
Donald's recent attempt, in a volume called *The New Shostakovich*, to portray the composer, anachronistically, as a life-long anti-Soviet "dissident." And yet there is indeed something about the symphony that does seem naggingly to foreground the issue of individual integrity and social stress—namely, the extremes within it of inwardness and extroversion, and the manifestly ironic way in which these extremes are juxtaposed and even thematically interchanged.

Of course I cannot say exactly what it is that this disquieting exchange of roles signifies. Unlike MacDonald, I have no ready verbal paraphrase with which to replace it, nor have I a ready answer to a friend of mine, a composer, who asked, "Why couldn't he just have been experimenting?" (except maybe the answer attributed to Edgard Varèse: "My experiments end up in the wastebasket, not the score"). But my uncertainty may be one reason why the symphony haunts me the way it does. Maybe incertitude—irreducible multivalence—is essential to experiencing it as a work of art. There is more to an art work, one has to think, than there is to a note in a bottle.

I'm pretty sure I do know exactly what the Eighth Quartet is about. Shostakovich has seen to that. This is the one composition of his that does ask expressly to be read as autobiography—the one time Shostakovich did put an explicit note in a bottle. And although my saying so may win me few friends, I believe that this melancholy, much admired work of 1960 reveals something beyond its intended message—something I, for one, would rather not believe. What it shows is that the need to communicate urgently and with specificity in an atmosphere of threat did at times shrink Shostakovich's creative options.

The wry relationship between the stated program—a requiem for the "victims of war and fascism," allegedly prompted by the viewing of atrocity footage during a sojourn in Dresden—and the music, which consists almost wholly of the composer's musical monogram ("DSCH," as the notes D, E-flat, C, and B are named in German) in thematic conjunction with allusions to his earlier works (the martyred opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, banned by express orders from on high, especially prominent among them), was evident from the start. Shostakovich was clearly identifying himself as a victim. In the final movement, when the DSCH motif is played in exquisitely wrought dissonant counterpoint against the main continuity motif from the last scene of *Lady Macbeth*, which depicts a convoy of prisoners en route to Siberia, things become almost too clear for political comfort. And yet, by hooking this self-dramatizing music, by means of its manifest program, onto "his" side's most hallowed and heavily exploited official-propaganda motif of the Cold War—namely, that it was the Soviet Union's heroic wartime sacrifices that had saved the world from fascism—Shostakovich forced the work's official acceptance and even its official promotion. This was, in its way, an impressive political coup.

The most searing page in Isaak Glikman's book is the one on which he describes the actual biographical subtext to the



Shostakovich was heir to a noble artistic tradition. His mature idea of art, in contrast to the egoistic traditions of Western modernism, was based not on alienation but on service.

Eighth Quartet. Shostakovich was being pressured to join the Communist Party as a trophy, and had not found within himself the fortitude to resist. It was in an agony of humiliation and self-reproach, as much as an agony of revulsion at fascist atrocities, that he conceived this work, and it was offered as an apologia, in the first instance to his own conscience.

The central strategy, it now seems clear, was to contrive the pointed conjunction, which takes place near the end of the fourth movement, between the DSCH motif and the single extensive quotation that does not come from one of Shostakovich's own works—namely, the famous song of revolutionary martyrdom that begins with the words "*Zamuchen tyazholy nevoley*," which mean, literally, "Tortured by grievous unfreedom." The citation was insulated from official suspicion by the fact, known to every Soviet child at school, that this was one of Lenin's favorite songs. Yet by appropriating it Shostakovich was, as it were, giving his quartet not only a subtext but literally a text, proclaiming his unfreedom and disclaiming responsibility for what he judged in himself to be an act of cowardice, or, rather, a craven failure to act.

The Eighth Quartet is thus a wrenching human document: wrenching the way Glikman's commentary to it is wrench-

ing, or the way . . . well, the way a note in a bottle can be wrenching. But its explicitness exacts a price. The quotations are lengthy and literal, amounting in the crucial fourth movement to a fairly inert medley; thematic transformations are very demonstratively, perhaps overdemonstratively, elaborated; startling juxtapositions are reiterated till they become familiar. The work provides its own running paraphrase, and the paraphrase moves inevitably into the foreground of consciousness as the note patterns become predictable.

The compulsion to write in this virtually telegraphic or stenographic way was unquestionably an inner compulsion. Its sincerity compels a strong empathic response; and yet the work, I feel, is weakened by it nevertheless. I do not find myself returning to it with renewed anticipation of discovery, and when I do find myself listening to it, I seem to be listening to it the way that Ian MacDonald and other determined paraphrasts evidently listen to every Shostakovich piece. MacDonald himself reveals the danger of such listening when he comes to evaluate the Ninth and Tenth Quartets, works to which the musical imagination—my musical imagination, at any rate—responds with less coercion and more imaginative energy. Finding in them little beyond the same anti-Stalinist program he finds in every Shostakovich piece, MacDonald writes dismissively, “One can be forgiven for thinking that we have been over this ground once too often.” Having ears only for the paraphrase, he is unable to distinguish one quartet from another, or distinguish his own hectoring, monotonous voice from Shostakovich’s.

ULTIMATELY, what is wrong with MacDonald’s monological approach, for all that one may sympathize with readings that respect the reality of the latent content, is the same thing that was wrong with many of the radically revisionist readings of Shostakovich that emanated out of the Soviet Union during the *glasnost* years, which now seem so long ago. In both cases Shostakovich has been assimilated to inappropriate ready-made models. In the failing Soviet Union he was cast as a “dissident” of a sort that simply did not exist during the better (or, rather, the worse) part of his lifetime. In the West he has been cast as an alienated modernist. Both moves reduce him to a stereotype.

To read in MacDonald’s book, for example, that the *Leningrad Symphony* was yet another exercise in sarcasm and anti-Stalinist opposition is painful. In contrast to White émigrés like Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff, who were raising funds and sending supplies for Russian war relief, and even in contrast to Anton Denikin, the White general who had led the campaign to attack Moscow during the Russian Civil War, and who had called upon his fellow émigrés not to support Germany in a possible conflict with the Soviet Union, Shostakovich comes across as obsessed with unassuageable feelings of political resentment and disaffection.

It is here that Glikman’s book, and others like it, can offer the most valuable corrective. The mature Shostakovich was

not a dissident. Nor was he a modernist. The mature Shostakovich was an *intelligent* (pronounced, Russian-style, with a hard g). He was heir to a noble tradition of artistic and social thought—one that abhorred injustice and political repression, but also one that valued social commitment, participation in one’s community, and solidarity with people. Shostakovich’s mature idea of art, in contrast to the egoistic traditions of Western modernism, was based not on alienation but on service. He found a way of maintaining public service and personal integrity under unimaginably hard conditions. In this way he remained, in the time-honored Russian if not exactly the Soviet sense of the word, a “civic” artist.

That was the ultimate irony, and the ultimate victory. Like the silenced Akhmatova and the martyred Mandelstam, Shostakovich, as the American Slavist Clare Cavanagh so movingly suggests, managed to bear witness “against the state on behalf of its citizenry.” This was perhaps the most honorable civic use to which music has ever been put, a use in which the composer and his silenced audience could reclaim their individual subjectivities from an all-powerful authority. Music was the only art that could serve this purpose publicly. Never was its value more gloriously affirmed.

And that is why Shostakovich’s music, while easy for advanced musicians in the West to deride, has always tugged at their collective conscience, making it necessary for them to deride it. The extreme social value placed on this music—by official ideology, to be sure, but also by disorderly, “carnivalistic” folk tradition (to borrow again from Bakhtin’s rich vocabulary)—has made the overweening technical preoccupations of the West look frivolous. The present rash of opportunistic efforts—by Volkov, by MacDonald, even by Glikman—authoritatively to define the meaning of Shostakovich’s work can only diminish that value. Definitive reading, especially biographical reading, locks the music in the past. Better let it remain supple, adaptable, ready to serve the future’s needs.

The significance of Dmitry Dmitriyevich Shostakovich in and for the history of twentieth-century music is immense, possibly unparalleled, and, above all, continuing. Anyone interested in that history, or alive to the issues his work so dramatically embodies, will listen to it (*pace* Thomson) without mind-wandering, unless musical perceptions are wholly divorced from moral perceptions. The fact that his work still looms in our consciousness, while that of so many once better-regarded figures has receded unregretted into *lethe*, suggests that the divorce is not yet final. The fate of the music, of its composer, and of the society from which they both emerged has made it, quite apart from its composer’s designs or those of any critic, precisely into a bulwark against that divorce. Smug paraphrasts notwithstanding, it is unlikely that we who live in more favored times and places can ever fully come to grips with such a legacy. Given our scholarly and critical interests, this may seem lamentable. In the context of our lives as we live them, it is something to rejoice in. ♪



DANIEL MACDONALD (1821–1853) / CRAWFORD MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY, CORK, IRELAND

AFTER VIEWING
THE BOWLING MATCH AT CASTLEMARY, CLOYNE
(1847)

I promised to show you the bowlers
out the Blarney Road after Sunday mass,
you were so taken with that painting
of the snazzy, top-hatted peasant class
all agog at the bowler in full swing,
down to his open shirt, in trousers
as indecently tight as a baseballer's.

You would relish each fling's span
along blackberry boreens and delight
in a *dinger* of a curve throw
as the bowl hurls out of sight,

not to mention the earthy lingo
& antics of gambling fans,
giving players thumbs-up or *down the banks*.

It's not just to witness such shenanigans
for themselves, but to be relieved
from whatever lurks in our day's background,
just as the picture's crowd is freed
of famine & exile darkening the land,
waiting to see where the bowl spins
off, a planet out of orbit, and who wins.

—GREG DELANTY



Rating: 99.9!

**We would give ourselves 100,
but we don't want to seem too self serving.**

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Died and Gone to Vegas

by TIM GAUTREAUX

"That story's sadder'n a armless old man in a room full of skeeters," Raynelle said. "You sorry sons of bitches tell the depressingest lies I ever heard."

 RAYNELLE Bullfinch told the young oiler that the only sense of mystery in her life was provided by a deck of cards. As she set up the table in the engine room of the *Leo B. Canterbury*, a government steam dredge anchored in a pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River, she lectured him. "Nick, you're just a college boy sitting out a bit until you get money to go back to school, but for me, this is it." She pulled a coppery braid from under her overalls strap, looked around at the steam chests and piping, and sniffed at the smell of heat-proof red enamel. In the glass of a steam gauge she checked her round, bright cheeks for grease and ran a white finger over the blue arcs of her eyebrows. She was the cook on the big boat, which was idle for a couple of days because of high winter winds. "My big adventure is cards. One day I'll save up enough to play with the skill boys in Vegas. Set up those folding chairs," she told him. "Seven in all."

"I don't know how to play bourrée, ma'am." Nick Montalbano ran a hand through long hair shiny with dressing. "I only had one semester of college." He looked sideways at the power straining the



bronze buckles of the tall woman's bib and avoided her green eyes, which were deep-set and full of intense judgment.

"Bullshit. A pet rat can play bourrée. Sit down." She pointed to a metal chair, and the oiler, a thin boy wearing an untucked plaid flannel shirt and a baseball cap, obeyed. "Pay attention here. I deal out five cards to everybody, and I turn up the last card. Whatever suit it is, that's trumps. Then you discard all your nontrumps and draw replacements. Remember, trumps beat all other suits, high trumps beat low trumps. Whatever card is led, you follow suit." She ducked her head under the bill of his cap, looking for his eyes. "This ain't too hard for you, is it? Ain't college stuff more complicated than this?"

"Sure, sure. I understand. But what if you can't follow suit?"

"If nontrumps is led, put a trump on it. If you ain't got no more trumps, just throw your lowest card. Trust me—you'll catch on quick."

"How do you win?" The oiler turned his cap around.

"Every hand has five tricks to take. If you take three tricks, you win the pot, unless only two decide to play that

hand after the draw. Then you need four tricks. If you got any questions, ask Sidney there.”

Sidney, the chief engineer, a little fireplug of a man who would wear a white T-shirt in a blizzard, sat down heavily with a whistle. “Oh, boy. Fresh meat.” He squeezed the oiler’s neck.

The steel door next to the starboard triple-expansion engine opened, letting in a wash of frigid air around the day fireman, pilot, deckhand, and welder, who came into the big room cursing and clapping the cold out of their clothes. Through the door the angry whitecaps of Southwest Pass raced down the Mississippi, bucking into the tarnished Gulf sky.

“Close that damned pneumonia-hole,” Raynelle cried, sailing cards precisely before the seven chairs. “Sit down, worms. Usual game: dollar ante, five-dollar rip if you don’t take a trick.” After the rain of halves and dollars came dis-

the dock told me the other day that he heard about a fellow got hit in the head over in Orange, Texas, and didn’t know who he was when he looked at his driver’s license. Had amnesia. That sorry-ass seamen’s hospital sent him home to his scuzz-bag wife, and he didn’t know her from Adam’s house cat.”

“That mighta been a blessing,” Raynelle said, sending him three cards in a flock. She rolled left on her ample bottom.

“No, it wasn’t,” the day fireman said, unzipping his heavy green field jacket. “That gal told him she was his sister, gave him a remote control and a color TV; he was happy as a fly on a pie. She started bringin’ boyfriends in at night, and that fool waved them into the house. Fixed ’em drinks. Figured any old dude good enough for Sis was good enough for him. The neighbors got to lookin’ at her like they was smellin’ somethin’ dead, so she and her old man moved to a better



cards, more dealing, and then a flurry of cards ending with a rising snowstorm of curses as no one took three tricks and the pot rolled over to the next hand. Three players took no tricks and put up the five-dollar rip.

The engineer unrolled a pack of Camels from his T-shirt sleeve and cursed loudest. “I heard of a bourrée game on a offshore rig where the pot didn’t clear for eighty-three passes. By the time somebody won that bitch, it had seventeen hundred dollars in it. The next day the genius what took it got a wrench upside the head in a Morgan City bar and woke up with his pockets inside out and the name Conchita tattooed around his left nipple.”

Pig, the day fireman, put up his ante and collected the next hand. “That ain’t nothin’.” He touched three discards to the top of his bald head and threw them down. “A ol’ boy down at

trailer park where nobody knew he’d lost his memory. She started into cocaine, and hookin’ for fun on the side. Her husband’s settlement money he got from the company what dropped a thirty-six-inch Stillson wrench on his hard hat began to shrink up a bit, but that old boy just sat there dizzy on some cheap pills she told him was a prescription. He’d channel surf all day, greet the johns like one of those old dried-up coots at Wal-Mart, and was the happiest son of a bitch in Orange, Texas.” The day fireman spread wide his arms. “Was he glad to see Sis come home every day. He was proud she had more friends than a postman with a bag full of welfare checks. And then his memory came back.”

“Ho, ho, the *merde* hit the blower,” the engineer said, slamming a queen down and raking in a trick.

“Nope. That poor bastard remembered every giggle in the

rear bedroom and started feelin' lower than a snake's nuts. He tried to get his old woman straight, but the dyed-over tramp just laughed in his face and moved out on him. He got so sorry he went to a shrink, but that just cost him more bucks. Finally, you know what that old dude wound up doin'? He looked for someone would hit him in the head again—you know, so he could get back the way he was. He offered a hundred dollars a pop, and in them Orange bars most people will whack on you for free, so you can imagine what kind of service he bought himself. After nearly gettin' killed four or five times, he give up and spent the rest of his settlement money on a hospital stay for a concussion. After that he held up a Pac-a-Bag for enough money to get himself hypnotized back to like he was after he got hit the first time. Wound up in the pen doin' twenty hard ones."

him in the back seat for runnin' off with a lawn mower. Dummy stole it in December."

"What's wrong with that?" the day fireman asked, pitching in a dollar.

"Who's gonna buy a used mower in winter, you moron? Anyway, the judge had pity on him, gave him a two-bit fine and sent him to bed with a sugar-tit. Said he was a good boy who ought to be satisfied to be simple and honest. But Stringbean hung out on the street corner crowin'. He was proud now. A real gangster, happy as Al Capone, his head pumped full of swamp gas by these losers he's hangin' around with. Finally one night he breaks into the house of a gun collector. Showin' how smart he is, he chooses only one gun to take from the rack—an engraved Purdy double-barrel, mint condition, with gold and ivory inlays all



They played three hands of cards while the day fireman finished the story, and then the deckhand in the game, a thick blond man in a black cotton sweater, threw back his head and laughed, *ha ha*, as if he were only pretending. "If that wadn' so funny, it'd be sad. It reminds me of this dumb-ass peckerwood kid lived next to me in Kentucky, built like a stringbean. He was a few thimbles shy of a quart, but he sort of knew he wadn' no nuclear-power-plant repairman and he got along with everybody. Then he started hangin' with these bad-ass kids—you know, the kind that carry spray paint, wear their hats backward, and stuff live rats in your mailbox. Well, they told the poor bastard he was some kind of Jesse James and got him into stealin' hubcaps and electric drills. He started struttin' around the neighborhood like he was bad news at midnight, and soon the local deputies had

over, a twenty-thousand-dollar gun. Stringbean took it home and with a two-dollar hacksaw cut the stock off and then most of the barrel. He went out and held up a taco joint and got sixteen dollars and thirteen cents. Was arrested when he walked out the door. This time a hard-nut judge sent him up on a multiple bill and he got two hundred ninety-seven years in Bisley."

"All right," Raynelle sang. "Better than death."

"He did ten years before the weepy-ass parole board noticed the sentence and pulled him in for review. Asked him did he get rehabilitated and would he go straight if he got out, and he spit on their mahogany table. He told them he wadn' no dummy and would be the richest bank robber in Kentucky if he got half a chance." The deckhand laughed, *ha ha*. "That give everybody an ice-cream headache, and the

meetin' came to a vote right quick. Even the American Civil Liberties lesbo lawyers on the parole board wanted to weld the door shut on him. It was somethin'."

THE pilot, a tall man wearing a pea jacket and a sock cap, raised a new hand to his sharp blue eyes and winced, keeping one trump and asking for four cards. "Gentlemen, that reminds me of a girl in Kentucky I knew at one time."

"Why? Did she get sent up two hundred ninety-seven years in Bisley?" the deckhand asked.

"No, she was from Kentucky, like that crazy fellow you just lied to us about. By the way, that king won't walk," he said, laying down an ace of diamonds. "This woman was a nurse at the VA hospital in Louisville and fell in love with one of her patients, a good-looking, mild-mannered fellow with a cyst in his brain that popped and gave him amnesia."

"Now, there's something you don't hear every day," the engineer said, trumping the ace with a bang.

"He didn't know what planet he came from," the pilot said stiffly. "A few months later they got married and he went to work in a local iron plant. After a year he began wandering away from work at lunchtime. So they fired him. He spent a couple of weeks walking up and down his street and all over Louisville looking into people's yards and checking passing buses for the faces in the windows. It was like he was looking for someone, but he couldn't remember who. One day he didn't come home at all. For eighteen months this pretty little nurse was beside herself with worry. Then her nephew was at a rock concert downtown and spotted a shaggy guy who looked familiar in the mosh pit, just standing there like he was watching a string quartet. Between songs the nephew asked the shaggy guy if he had amnesia, which is a rather odd question, considering, and the man almost started crying, because he figured he'd been recognized."

"That's a sweet story," the day fireman said, rubbing his eyes with his bear-paw-sized hands. "Sidney, could you loan me your handkerchief? I'm all choked up."

"Choke this," the pilot said, trumping the fireman's jack. "Anyway, the little nurse gets attached to the guy again and is glad to have him back. She refreshes his memory about their marriage and all that and starts over with him. Things are better than ever, as far as she is concerned. Well, about a year of marital bliss goes by, and one evening there's a knock at the door. She gets up off the sofa where the amnesia guy is, opens it, and it's her husband, whose memory came back."

"Wait a minute," the deckhand said. "I thought that was her husband on the sofa."

"I never said it was her husband. She just thought it was her husband. It turns out that the guy on the sofa she's been living with for a year is the identical twin to the guy on the doorstep. Got an identical popped cyst, too."

"Aw, bullshit," the day fireman bellowed.

The engineer leaned back and put his hand on a valve handle. "I better pump this place out."

"Hey," the pilot yelled above the bickering. "I knew this girl. Her family lived across the street from my aunt. Anyway, after all the explanations were made, the guy who surfaced at the rock concert agreed it would be best if he moved on, and the wandering twin started back where he left off with his wife. Got his job back at the iron plant. But the wife wasn't happy anymore."

"Why the hell not?" the engineer asked, dealing the next hand. "She had two for the price of one."

"Yeah, well, even though those guys were identical in every way, something was different. We'll never know what it was, but she couldn't get over the second twin. Got so she would wander around herself, driving all over town looking for him."

"What the hell?" The deckhand threw down his cards. "She had her husband back, didn't she?"

"Oh, it was bad," the pilot continued. "She's driving down the street one day and sees the rock-concert twin, gets out of her car, runs into a park yelling and sobbing, and throws her arms around him, crying, 'I found you at last, I found you at last.' Only it wasn't him."

"Jeez," the engineer said. "Triplets."

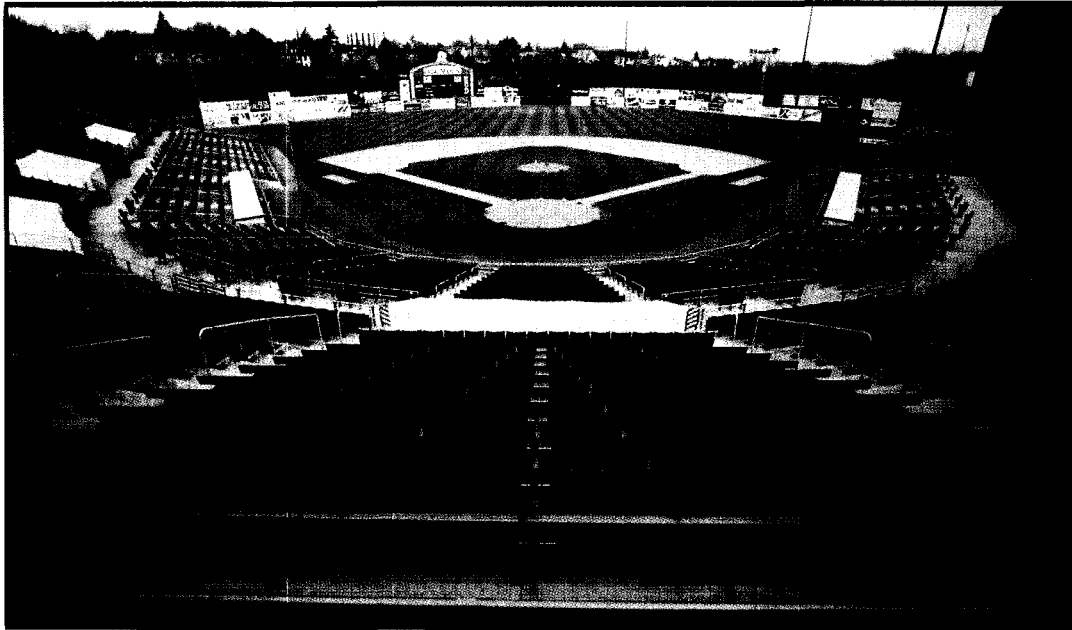
"No." The pilot shook his head. "It was worse than that. It was her husband, who was out on delivery for the iron plant, taking a break in the park after shucking his coveralls. Mild-mannered amnesiac or not, he was pretty put out at the way she was carrying on. But he didn't show it. He pretended to be his twin and asked her why she liked him better than her husband. And she told him. Now, don't ask me what it was. The difference was in her mind, way I heard it. But that guy disappeared again the next morning, and that was five years ago. They say you can go down in east Louisville and see her driving around today in a ratty green Torino, looking for one of those twins, this scared look in her eyes like she'll find one and never be sure which one she got hold of."

RAYNELLE pulled a pecan out of her bib pocket and cracked it between her thumb and forefinger. "That story's sadder'n a armless old man in a room full of skeeters. You sorry sons of bitches tell the depressingest lies I ever heard."

The deckhand lit up an unfiltered cigarette. "Well, sweet thing, why don't you cheer us up with one of your own?"

Raynelle looked up at a brass steam gauge bolted to an I beam. "I did know a fellow worked in an iron foundry, come to think of it. His whole family worked the same place, which is a pain in the butt if you've ever done that, what with your uncle giving you wet willies and your cousin bumming money. This fellow drove a gray Dodge Dart, the kind with the old slant-six engine that'll carry you to hell and back, slow. His relatives made fun of him for it, said he was cheap and wore plastic shoes and ate Spam—that kind of thing." She turned

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Taxpayers benefit. Services improve. Everyone wins. Sometimes all it takes to build a stadium is a little bit of teamwork.

**PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
PARTNERS FOR CHANGE**

the last card to show trumps, banging up a king. "Sidney, you better not bourrée again. You're in this pot for thirty dollars."

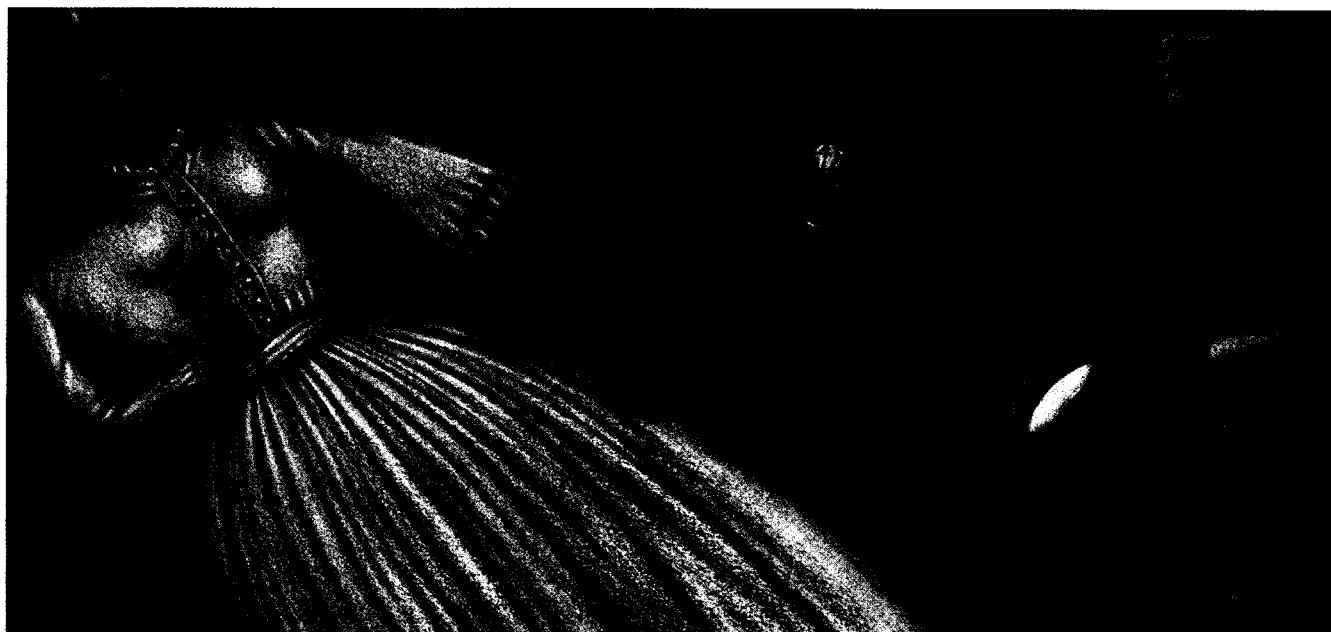
The engineer swept up his hand, pressing it against his T-shirt. "I can count."

"Anyway, this boy thought he'd show his family a thing or two and went out and proposed to the pretty girl who keyed in the invoices in the office. He bought her a diamond ring that would choke an elephant, on time. It was a *nice* ring." Raynelle looked at the six men around the table as if none of them would ever buy such a ring. "He was gonna give it to her on her birthday, right before they got married in three weeks, and meantime he showed it around at the iron foundry figuring it'd make 'em shut up, which basically it did."

tion. But he started thinking about the monthly payments he was making on that ring and how they would go on for four and a half more years, keeping him from affording a decent ring for this living girl."

"Oh, no," the pilot said, as the hand split again and the pot rolled over yet another time.

"That's right. He got some tools and after midnight went down to Heavenly Oaks Mausoleum and unscrewed the marble door on her drawer, slid out the coffin, and opened it up. I don't know how he could stand to rummage around in whatever was left in the box, but damned if he didn't get that ring and put the grave back together slick as a whistle. So the next day he give it to the hygienist and everything's okay. A



"They was probably speechless at how dumb he was," the deckhand said out of the side of his mouth.

"But don't you know that before he got to give it to her, that girl hit her head on the edge of her daddy's swimming pool and drowned. The whole foundry went into mourning, as did those kids' families and the little town in general. She had a big funeral and she was laid out in her wedding dress in a white casket surrounded by every carnation in four counties. Everybody was crying, and the funeral parlor had this lovely music playing. I guess the boy got caught up in the feeling, because he walked over to the coffin right before they was gonna screw down the lid and he put that engagement ring on that girl's finger."

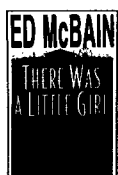
"Naw," the engineer said breathlessly, playing a card without looking at it.

"Yes, he did. And he felt proud that he done it. At least for a month or two. Then he began to have eyes for a dental hygienist, and that little romance took off hot as a bottle rocket. He courted her for six months and decided to pop the ques-

bit later they get married and are doing the lovebird bit in a trailer down by the foundry." Raynelle cracked another pecan against the edge of the table, crushing it with the pressure of her palm in a way that made the welder and the oiler look at each other. "But there's a big blue blowfly in the ointment. She was showing off that ring by the minute, and someone recognized the damned thing and told her. Well, she had a thirty-megaton double-PMS hissy fit and told him straight up that she won't wear no dead woman's ring, and throws it in his face. Said the thing gave her the willies. He told her it's that or a King Edward cigar band, because he won't get out from under the payments until the twenty-first century. It went back and forth like that for a month, with the neighbors up and down the road, including my aunt Tammy, calling the police to come get them to shut up. Finally the hygienist told him she'd wear the ring."

"Well, that's a happy ending," the deckhand said.

Raynelle popped half a pecan into her red mouth. "Shut up, Jack, I ain't finished. This hygienist began to wear cowboy



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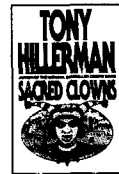
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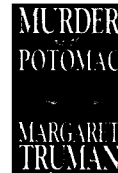
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blouses and jean miniskirts just like the girl in the foundry office did. The old boy kind of liked it at first, but when she dyed her hair the same color as the first girl, it gave him the shakes. She said she was dreaming of that dead girl at least twice a week and saw her in her dresser mirror when she woke up. Then she began to talk like the foundry girl did, with a snappy Arkansas twang. And the dead girl was a country-music freak—liked the old stuff, too. Damned if in the middle of the night the guy wasn't waked up by his wife singing in her sleep all eleven verses of 'El Paso,' the Marty Robbins tune.

"He figured it was the ring causing all the trouble, so he got his wife drunk and while she was asleep slipped that sucker off and headed to the graveyard to put it back on that bone where he took it. Soon as he popped the lid, the cops was on him asking him what the living hell he was doing. He told them he was putting a diamond ring back in the coffin, and they said, Sure, buddy. Man, he got charged with six or eight nasty things perverts do to dead bodies, and then the dead girl's family filed six or eight civil suits, and believe me, there was mental anguish, pain, and suffering enough to feed the whole county. A local judge who was the dead girl's uncle sent him up for six years, and the hygienist divorced him. Strange thing was that she kept her new hair color and way of dressing, began going to George Jones concerts, and last I heard had quit her job at the dentist and was running the computers down at the iron foundry."

RAYNELLE, *chère*, I wish you wouldn't of said that one." Simoneaux, the welder, never spoke much until late in the game. He was a thin Cajun, seldom without a Camel in the corner of his mouth and a high-crowned, polka-dotted welder's cap turned backward on his head. He shrugged off a violent chill. "That story gives me *les frissons* up and down my back." A long stick of beef jerky jutted from the pocket of his flannel shirt. He pulled it out, plucked a lint ball from the bottom, and bit off a small knob of meat. "But that diamond shit reminds me of a old boy I knew down in Grand Crapaud who was workin' on Pancho Oil number six offshore from Point au Fer. The driller was puttin' down the pipe hard one day and my frien' the mud engineer was takin' a dump on the engine-room toilet. All at once they hit them a gas pocket at five t'ousand feet and drill pipe came back up that hole like drinkin' straws, knockin' out the top of the rig, flyin' up in the sky, and breakin' apart at the joints. Well, my frien', he had a magazine spread out across his lap when a six-inch drill pipe hit the roof like a spear and went through-and-through the main diesel engine. About a half second later another one passed between his knees, through the Playmate of the Month and the steel deck both, yeah. He could hear the iron comin' down all over the rig, but he couldn't run because his pants was around his ankles on the other side of the drill column between his legs. He figured he was goin' to glory before he could get some

toilet paper, but a worm run in the engine room and cut him loose with a jackknife, and then they both took off over the side and hit the water. My frien' rolled through them breakers holdin' on to a drum of mineral spirits, floppin' around until a bad-ass fish gave him a bite on his giblets, and that was the only injury he had."

"Ouch, man." The deckhand crossed his legs.

"What?" Raynelle looked up while posting her five-dollar bourrée.

The welder threw in yet another ante, riffling the dollar bills in the pot as though figuring how much it weighed. "Well, he was hurt enough to get the company to pay him a lump sum after he got a four-by-four lawyer to sue their two-by-four insurance company. That's for true. My frien', he always said he wanted a fancy car. The first t'ing he did was to drive to Lafayette and buy a sixty-five-t'ousand-dollar Mercedes, yeah. He put new mud-grip tires on that and drove it down to the Church Key Lounge, in Morgan City, where all his mud-pumpin' buddies hung out, and it didn't take long to set off about half a dozen of them hard hats, no." The welder shook his narrow head. "He was braggin' bad, yeah."

The engineer opened his cards on his belly and rolled his eyes. "A new Mercedes in Morgan City? Whew."

"*Mais oui*, you can say that again. About two, t'ree o'clock in the mornin' my frien', he come out and what he saw woulda made a muskrat cry. Somebody took a number two ball-peen hammer and dented everythin' on that car that would take a dent. That t'ing looked like it got caught in a cue-ball tornado storm. Next day he brought it by the insurance people and they told him the policy didn't cover vandalism. Told him he would have to pay to get it fixed or drive it like that.

"But my frien', he had blew most all his money on the car to begin with. When he drove it, everybody looked at him like he was some kind of freak. You know, he wanted people to look at him, that's why he bought the car, but they was lookin' at him the wrong way, like 'You mus' be some prime jerk to have someone mess with you car like that.' So after a week of havin' people run off the road turnin' their necks to look at that new Mercedes, he got drunk, went to the store and bought about twenty cans of Bondo, tape, and cans of spray paint."

"Don't say it," the deckhand cried.

"No, no," the engineer said to his cards.

"What?" Raynelle asked.

"Yeah, the po' bastard couldn't make a snake out of Play-Doh and is gonna try and restore a fine European se-dan. He filed and sanded on that poor car for a week, and then hit it with that dollar-a-can paint. When he finished up, that Mercedes looked like it was battered for fryin'. He drove it around Grand Crapaud, and people just pointed and doubled over. He kept it outside his trailer at night, and people would drive up and park, just to look at it. Phone calls started comin', the hang-up kind that said things like 'You look like your car,' click, or 'What kind of icin' did you

use?" click. My frien' finally took out his insurance policy and saw what it did cover—theft.

"So he started leavin' the keys in it parked down by the abandoned lumber yard, but nobody in Grand Crapaud would steal it. He drove to Lafayette, rented a motel room, yeah, and parked it outside that bad housin' project with keys in it." The welder threw in another hand and watched the cards fly. "Next night he left the windows down with the keys in it." He pulled off his polka-dotted cap and ran his fingers through his dark hair. "Third night he left the motor runnin' and the lights on with the car blockin' the driveway of a crack house. Next mornin' he found it twenty feet away, idled out of diesel with a dead battery. It was that ugly."

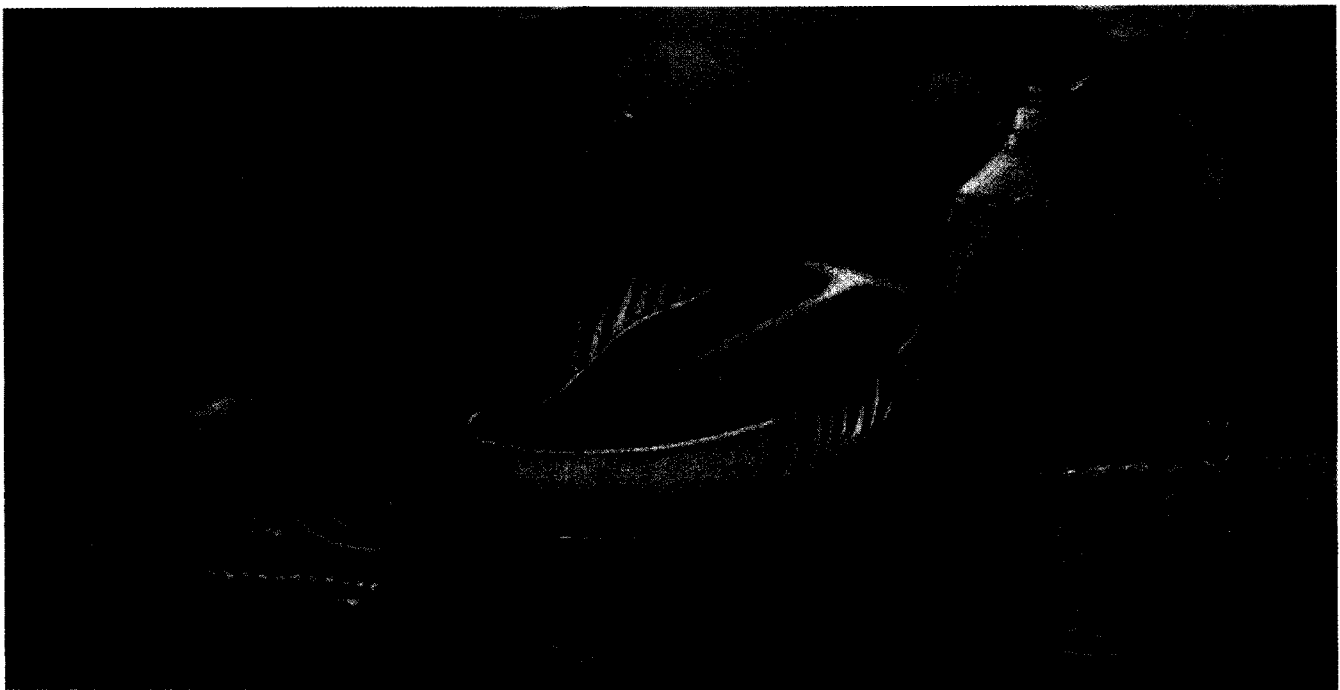
and pushed it the other way from where he wanted it to fall."

"What'd it hit?"

"It mashed his trailer like a cockroach, yeah. The propane stove blew up, and by the time the Grand Crapaud fire truck come around, all they could do was break out coat hangers and mushmellas. His wife what lef' ain't paid the insurance on the double-wide, no, so now he got to get him a camp stove and a picnic table, so he can shack up in the Mercedes."

"He lived in the car?"

The welder nodded glumly. "Po' bastard wouldn't do nothin' but drink up the few bucks he had lef' and lie in the back seat. One night last fall we had that cold snap, you remember? It got so cold around Grand Crapaud you could



"What happened next?" The pilot trumped an ace as if he were killing a bug.

"My frien', he called me up, you know. Said he wished he had a used standard-shift Ford pickup and the money in the bank. His wife left him, his momma made him take a cab to come see her, and all he could stand to do was drink and stay in his trailer. I didn't know what to tell him. He said he was gonna read his policy some more."

"Split pot again," the deckhand shouted. "I can't get out this game. I feel like my nuts is hung up in a fan belt."

"Shut your trap and deal," Raynelle said, sailing a loose wad of cards in the deckhand's direction. "What happened to the Mercedes guy?"

The welder put his cap back on and pulled up the crown. "Well, his policy said it covered all kinds of accidents, you know, so he parked it in back next to a big longleaf pine and cut that sucker down, only it was a windy day and as soon as he got through that tree with the saw, a gust come up

hear the sugarcane stalks poppin' out in the fields like fire-crackers. They found my frien' froze to death sittin' up behind the steerin' wheel. T-nook, the paramedic, said his eyes was open, starin' over the hood like he was goin' for a drive." The welder pushed his downturned hand out slowly like a big sedan driving toward the horizon. Everybody's eyes followed it for a long moment.

NEW deck," the engineer cried, throwing in his last trump and watching it get swallowed by a jack. "Nick, you little dago, give me that blue deck." The oiler, a quiet, olive-skinned boy from New Orleans's west bank, pushed the new box over. "New deck, new luck," the engineer told him. "You know, I used to date this old fat gal lived in a double-wide north of Biloxi. God, that woman liked to eat. When I called it off, she asked me why, and I told her I was afraid she was going to get thirteen inches around the

ankles. That must have got her attention, because she went on some kind of fat-killer diet and exercise program that about wore out the floor beams in that trailer. But she got real slim, I heard. She had a pretty face, I'll admit that. She started hittin' the bars and soon had her a cow farmer ask her to marry him, which she did."

"Is a cow farmer like a rancher?" Raynelle asked, her tongue in her cheek like a jawbreaker.

"It's what I said it was. Who the hell ever heard of a ranch in Biloxi? Anyway, this old gal developed a fancy for steaks, since her man got meat reasonable, bein' a cow farmer and all. She started puttin' away the T-bones and swellin' like a sow on steroids. After a year she blowed up to her fightin'

and hit it off real good, like old drinkin' buddies. After a couple months the lawyer went into business with the farmer and together they doubled the cattle production, 'specially since they got rid of the critters' worst predator."

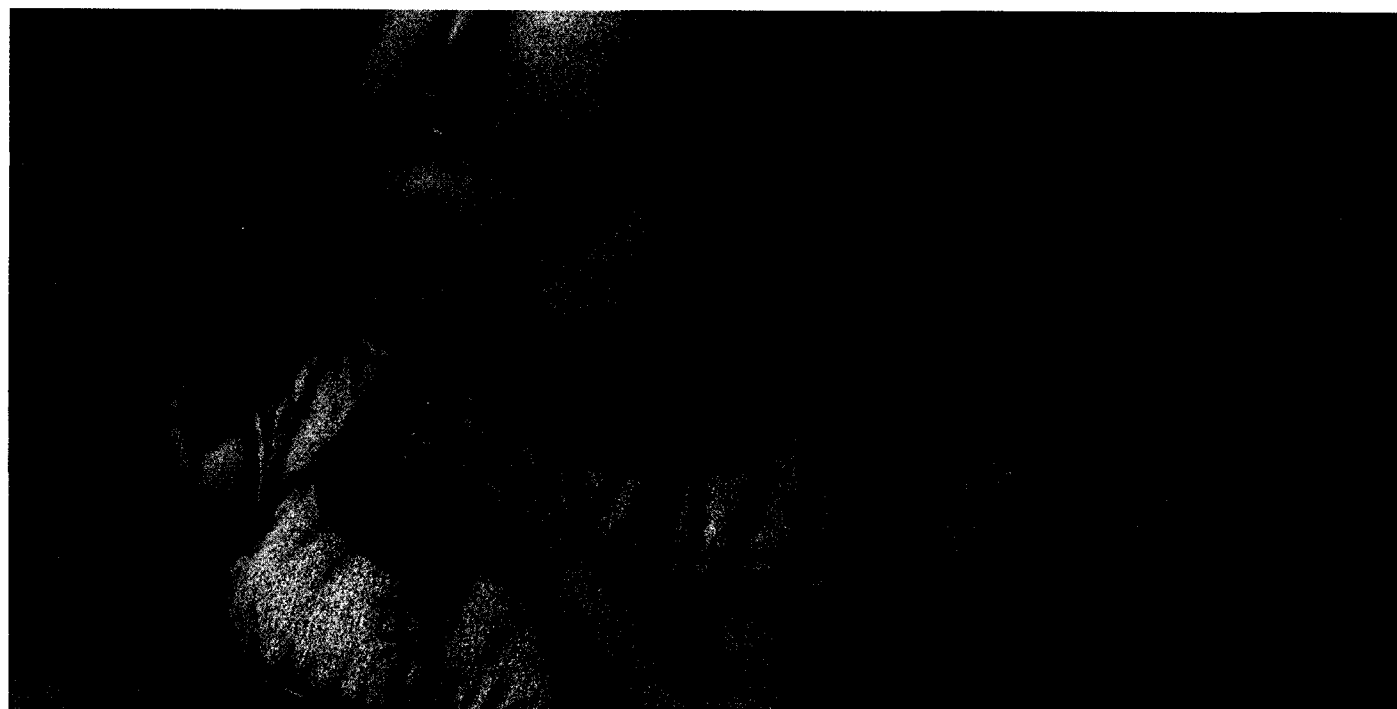
Raynelle's eyebrows came together like a small thunderhead. "Well?"

"Well what?" The engineer scratched an armpit.

"What happened to that poor girl?"

All the men looked around uneasily. Raynelle had permanently disabled a boilermaker on the *St. Genevieve* with a cornbread skillet.

"She got back on her diet, I heard. Down to one hundred twenty pounds again."



weight and then some. I heard she'd eat up about half the cows on the farm before he told her he wanted a divorce. She told him she'd sue to get half the farm, and he said go for it—it'd be worth it if someone would just roll her off his half. She hooked up with this greasy little lawyer from Waveland, and sure enough, he got half the husband's place. After the court dealings he took this old gal out to supper to celebrate and one thing led to another and they wound up at her apartment for a little slap-and-tickle. I'll be damned if they didn't fall out of bed together with her on top, and he broke three ribs and ruined a knee on a night table. After a year of treatments he sued her good and got her half of the farm."

The deckhand threw his head back, *ha ha*. "That's a double screwin' if ever there was one."

"Hey, it don't stop there. The little lawyer called up the farmer and said, 'Since we gonna be neighbors, why don't you tell me a good spot to build a house?' They got together

"That's the scary thing about women," the day fireman volunteered, putting up three fingers to ask for his draw. "Marryin' 'em is just like cuttin' the steel bands on a bale of cotton. First thing you know, you've got a roomful of woman."

Raynelle glowered. "Careful I don't pour salt on you and watch you melt."

The engineer released a sigh. "Okay, Nick, you the only one ain't told a lie yet."

The young oiler ducked his head. "Don't know none."

"Haw," Raynelle said. "A man without bullshit. Check his drawers, Simoneaux, see he ain't Nancy instead of Nicky."

Reddening, the oiler frowned at his hand. "Well, the cows remind me of somethin' I heard while I was playin' the poker machines over in Port Allen the other day," he said, a long strand of black hair falling in his eyes. "There was this Mexican guy named Gonzales who worked with cows in Matamoros."

"Another cow farmer," the deckhand said with a groan.

"Shut up," Raynelle said. "Was that his first name or second name?"

"Well, both."

"What?" She pitched a card at him.

"Aw, Miss Raynelle, you know how those Mexicans are with their names. This guy's name was Gonzales Gonzales, with a bunch of names in between." Raynelle cocked her ear whenever she heard the oiler speak. She had a hard time with his New Orleans accent, which she found to be Bronxlike. "He was a pretty smart fella and got into Texas legal, worked a few years, and became a naturalized citizen, him and his wife both."

through there? Well, this Gonzales was dark, and his car was a beat-up smoker, so they pulled him one day on his way to Baton Rouge. The cop stands outside his window and says, 'Lemme see your license'; Gonzales says he forgot it at home on the dresser. The cop pulls out a ticket book and says, 'What's your last name?' He says, 'Gonzales.' The cop says, 'What's your first name?' and he tells him. That officer leans in the window and sniffs his breath. 'Okay, Gonzales Gonzales,' he says real nasty, 'where you live?' 'Gonzales,' he says. 'Okay, boy. Get out the car,' the cop says. He throws him against the door, hard. 'And who do you work for?' Gonzales looks him in the eye and says, 'Gonzales and Gonzales.' The cop turns him around and slams his head against



"What was his wife's name?" the pilot asked. "Maria Maria?"

"Come on, now, do you want to hear this or don'tcha?" The oiler pushed the hair out of his eyes. "The cattle industry shrunk up where he was at, and he looked around for another place to try and settle. He started to go to Gonzales, Texas, but there ain't no work there, so he gets out a map and spots Gonzales, Louisiana."

"That rough place with all the jitterbug joints?"

"Yep. Lots of blacks and roughnecks, but they ain't no Mexicans. Must have been settled a million years ago by a family of Gonzaleses who probably speak French and eat gumbo nowadays. So Gonzales Gonzales gets him a job for two local lawyers who run a horse farm on the side. He gets an apartment on Gonzales Street down by the train station." The oiler looked at a new hand, fanning the cards out slowly. "You know how hard-nosed the Airline Highway cops are

the roof and says, 'Yeah, and you probably live on Gonzales Street, huh, you slimy son of a bitch.' 'At one-two-two-six, Apartment E,' Gonzales says."

The deckhand put his cards over his eyes. "The poor bastard."

"Yeah," the oiler said, and sighed. "He got beat up and jailed that time until the Gonzales lawyers went up and sprung him. About once a month some cop would pull him over and give him hell. When he applied for a little loan at the bank, they threw him in the street. When he tried to get a credit card, the company called the feds, who investigated him for fraud. Nobody would cash his checks, and the first year he filed state and federal taxes, three government cars stayed in his driveway for a week. Nobody believed who he was."

"That musta drove him nuts," the welder said, drawing four cards.

"I don't think so, man. He knew who he was. Gonzales

Gonzales knew he was in America and you could control what you was, unlike in Mexico. So when the traffic cops beat him up, he sold his car and got a bike. When the banks wouldn't give him no checks, he used cash. When the tax people refused to admit he existed, he stopped payin' taxes. Man, he worked hard and saved every penny. One day it was real hot, and he was walkin' into Gonzales because his bike had a flat. He stopped in the Rat's Nest Lounge to get a root beer, and they was this drunk from west Texas in there makin' life hard for the barmaid. He come over to Gonzales and asked him would he have a drink. He said sure, and the bartender set up a whiskey and a root beer. The cowboy was full of Early Times and pills, and you coulda lit a blowtorch off his eyeballs. He put his arm around Gonzales and asked him what his name was, you know. When he heard it, he got all serious, like he was bein' made fun of or somethin'. He asked a couple more questions and started struttin' and cussin'. He pulled an engraved Colt out from under a cheesy denim jacket and stuck it in Gonzales's mouth. 'You jerkin' me around, man,' that cowboy told him. 'You tellin' me you're Gonzales Gonzales from Gonzales who lives on Gonzales Street and works for Gonzales and Gonzales?' That Mexican looked at the gun, and I don't know what was goin' through his head, but he nodded, and the cowboy pulled back the hammer."

"Damn," the welder said.

"I don't want to hear this." Raynelle clapped the cards to her ears.

"Hey," the oiler said. "Like I told you, he knew who he was. He pointed to the phone book by the register, and after a minute the bartender had it open and held it out to the cowboy. Sure enough, old Ma Bell had come through for the American way, and Gonzales was listed, with the street and all. The cowboy took the gun out Gonzales's mouth and started cryin' like the crazy snail he was. He told Gonzales that he was sorry and gave him the Colt. Said that his girlfriend left him and his dog died, or maybe it was the other way around. Gonzales went down the street and called the cops. In two months he got a six-thousand-dollar reward for turnin' in the guy, who, it turns out, had killed his girlfriend and his dog, too, over in Laredo. He got five hundred for the Colt and moved to Baton Rouge, where he started a postage stamp of a used-car lot. Did well, too. Got a dealership now."

The day fireman snapped his fingers. "G. Gonzales Buick-Olds?"

"That's it, man," the oiler said.

"The smilin' rich dude in the commercials?"

"Like I said," the oiler told the table. "He knew who he was."

"Mary and Joseph, everybody is in this hand," the pilot yelled. "Spades is trumps."

"*Laissez les bons temps rouler*," the welder sang, laying an eight of spades on a pile of diamonds and raking in the trick.

"That's your skinny ass," Raynelle said, playing a ten of spades last, taking the second trick.

"Do I smell the ten millionth rollover pot?" the engineer asked. "There must be six hundred fifty dollars in that pile." He threw down a nine and covered the third trick.

"Coming gitcha." Raynelle raised her hand high, plucked a card, and slammed a jack to win the fourth trick. That was two. She led the king of spades and watched the cards follow.

The pilot put his hands together and prayed. "Please, somebody, have the ace." He played his card and sat up to watch as each man threw his last card in, no one able to beat the king, and then Raynelle jumped in the air liked a hooked marlin, nearly upsetting the table, screaming and waving her meaty arms through the steamy engine-room air. "I never won so much money in my life," she cried, falling from the waist onto the pile of bills and coins and raking it beneath her.

"Whatcha gonna do with all that money?" the welder asked, turning his hat around in disbelief.

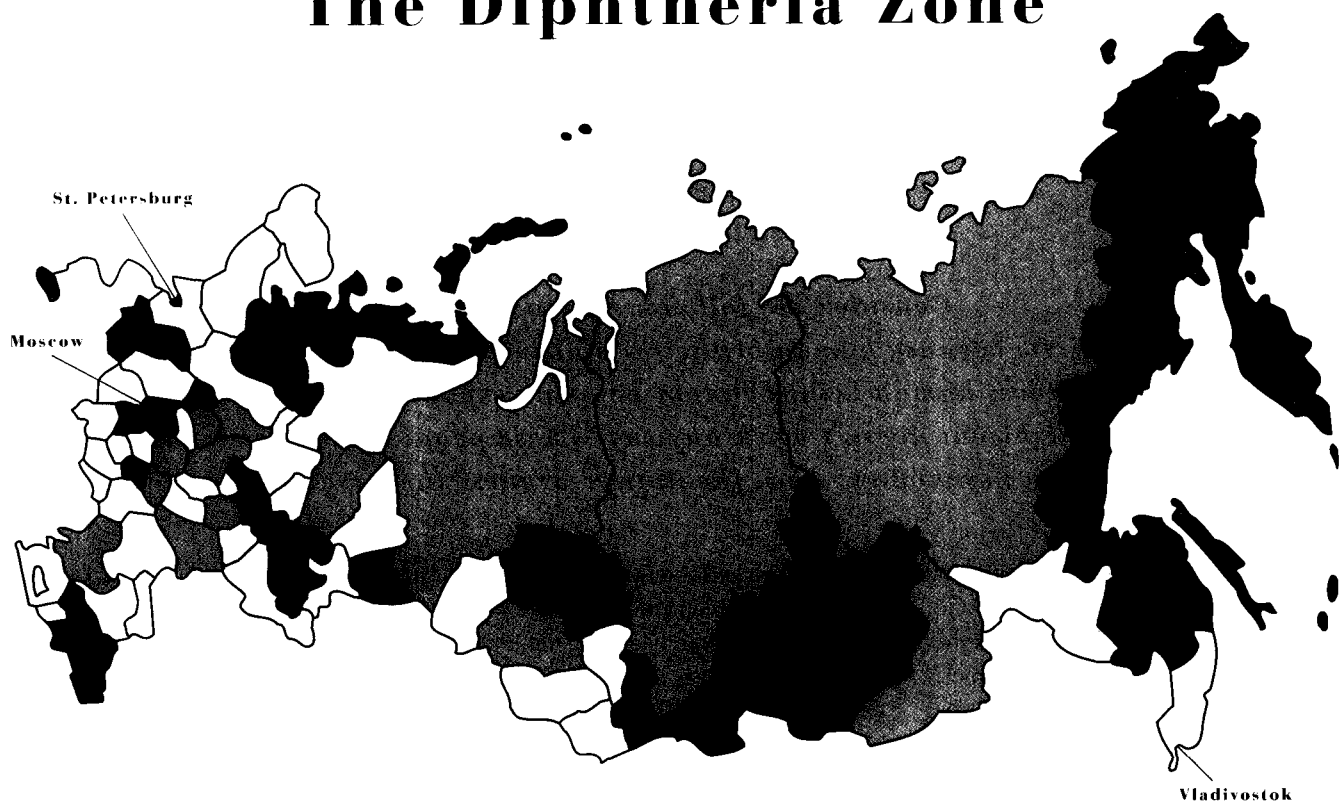
She began stuffing the bib pocket on her overalls with half dollars. "I'm gonna buy me a silver lamé dress and one of those cheap tickets to Las Vegas, where I can do some high-class gambling. No more of this penny-ante stuff with old men and worms."

Four of the men got up to relieve their bladders or get cigarettes or grab something to drink. The pilot leaned against a column of insulated pipe. "Hell, we all want to go to Las Vegas. Don't you want to take one of us along to the holy land?"

"Man, I'm gonna gamble with gentlemen. Ranchers, not cow farmers either." She folded a wad of bills into a hip pocket.

Nick, the young oiler, laced his fingers behind his head, leaned back, and closed his eyes. He wondered what Raynelle would do in such a glitzy place as Las Vegas. He imagined her wearing a Sears gown in a casino full of tourists dressed in shorts and sneakers. She would be drinking too much and eating too much, and the gown would look like it was crammed with rising dough. She would get in a fight with a blackjack dealer after she'd lost all her money and would be thrown out on the street. After selling her plane ticket, she would be back at the slot machines until she was completely broke, and then she would be on a neon-infested boulevard, her tiny silver purse hanging from her shoulder on a long spaghetti strap, one heel broken off a silver shoe. He saw her walking at last across the desert through the waves of heat, mountains in front and the angry snarl of cross-country traffic in the rear, until she sobered up and began to hitch, and was picked up by a carload of Jehovah's Witnesses driving to a convention in Baton Rouge in an un-air-conditioned compact stuck in second gear. Every thirty miles the car would overheat and they would all get out, stand among the cactus, and pray. Raynelle would curse them, and they would pray harder for the big sunburned woman sweating in the metallic dress. The desert would spread before her as far as the end of the world, a hot and rocky place empty of mirages and dreams. She might not live to get out of it. ☼

The Diphtheria Zone



New diphtheria cases per 100,000 people, 1990–1991



Source: Environmental and Health Atlas of Russia (Center for Post-Soviet Studies, Chevy Chase, Md.), February, 1995.

WIDESPREAD immunization programs launched almost fifty years ago in the United States have routed the highly infectious and sometimes fatal disease diphtheria. In 1993 the Centers for Disease Control recorded no cases of diphtheria among the country's 259 million residents.

Russia's is a dramatically different story. Like other disease-causing microorganisms, the bacterium that causes diphtheria is exploiting the disorder in Russia and has spread to every part of the country. Inadequate immunization is just one cause; America actually has the same proportion of susceptible adults (about one half). Other factors include Russia's high degree of internal migration and its failure to respond quickly to the epidemic with booster shots and antibiotics. In 1982 in all of the Soviet Union 340 cases of diphtheria were reported. The number of cases reported in 1994 in Russia alone is expected, when the final tally is in, to reach 40,000.

The map above contains diphtheria data for each of the Russian Federation's basic administrative districts (the other former Soviet republics do not appear). Data for 1990 and 1991 are the most recent available for the purpose of mapping all of Russia's districts. Although the incidence of diphtheria across the Russian Federation has skyrocketed every year since 1991,

the map remains a reliable guide to the regional distribution of the disease. Diphtheria thrives on close human contact, spreading through contagious sneezes, and it therefore has caused the most damage in cities. In 1993 St. Petersburg had the country's highest rate of new cases: 52 per 100,000 people, as compared with 0.5 three years earlier. Many of the adults who have come down with the disease have been bus and streetcar drivers, cafeteria workers, and others who are in daily contact with the public.

The numbers for all districts understate the true dimensions of the epidemic: for fear of acquiring a range of infections through multi-use syringes or locally produced vaccines, many sick Russians now avoid clinics altogether, and thus do not show up in epidemiological data. Needless to say, foreigners are advised to get a diphtheria booster before traveling to Russia.

The map above, like many of the 300 others in the forthcoming *Environmental and Health Atlas of Russia*, is based on the kind of information that simply was not available—anywhere—as recently as two years ago. It was compiled with the assistance of the Center for Post-Soviet Studies, in the United States, and the Russian Federation's Interdepartmental Commission on Environmental Security. —Murray Feshbach

On Responsibility and Punishment

by JOHN STADDON

Consider the following propositions:

First, because human behavior is ultimately determined by outside factors, human beings cannot be held responsible for their actions.

Second, punishment doesn't work anyway. These propositions are legacies of modern psychology. And, the author argues, they are nonsense

THE litany of social dysfunction is now familiar. The rates of violent crime are 40 percent higher than they were a decade ago; Americans kill and maim one another at per capita rates five to ten times as high as those of other industrialized nations. The rate of illegitimacy continues to climb. Tens of thousands of children have no fathers and no family members or close acquaintances who hold regular jobs; this pattern is now repeating into the second and third generations. Illiteracy is a big problem, and schools have so lost authority that the accepted response to armed pupils is to install metal detectors. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in a celebrated article, recently pointed out that we cope with social disintegration by redefining deviancy, so that crimes become "normal" behavior.

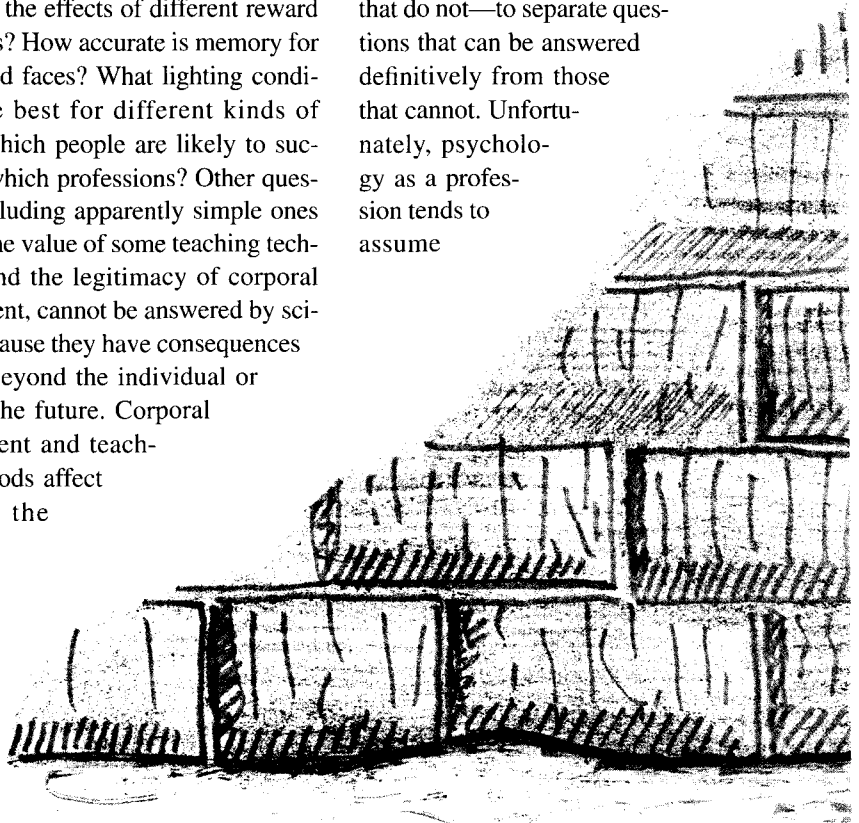
How did we arrive at this condition? There's no short answer, but I have increasingly come to believe that my own profession—psychology—bears a large part of the blame. The story began many years ago, when psychology defined itself as a science. Thus self-anointed, the discipline gained great prestige. People accepted with little demur prescriptions that would earlier have been condemned on moral grounds. Don't spank your child. Don't attempt to deter sexual exploration by young people—deterrence is probably bad and will certainly fail. Punishment

is ineffective and should be replaced by positive reinforcement. Self-esteem is good, social stigma bad. It is not clear that this advice was all wrong. What is clear, and what I will show in this article, is that it was not based on *science*.

Some questions about behavior can be answered—either now or in the future—through the methods of science. How does visual perception work? What are the effects of different reward schedules? How accurate is memory for words and faces? What lighting conditions are best for different kinds of tasks? Which people are likely to succeed in which professions? Other questions, including apparently simple ones such as the value of some teaching techniques and the legitimacy of corporal punishment, cannot be answered by science, because they have consequences that go beyond the individual or far into the future. Corporal punishment and teaching methods affect not just the child

but, eventually, the nature of society. Society cannot be the subject of experiments, and even if it could, the effects of social changes usually take decades or even centuries to play out. Hence we often cannot expect to get hard scientific answers to social questions.

Obviously, we need to separate those questions that belong in the domain of science from those that do not—to separate questions that can be answered definitively from those that cannot. Unfortunately, psychology as a profession tends to assume



that all questions about human action fall within its domain and that all can eventually be answered with the authority of science—and this imperialism has gone largely unquestioned.

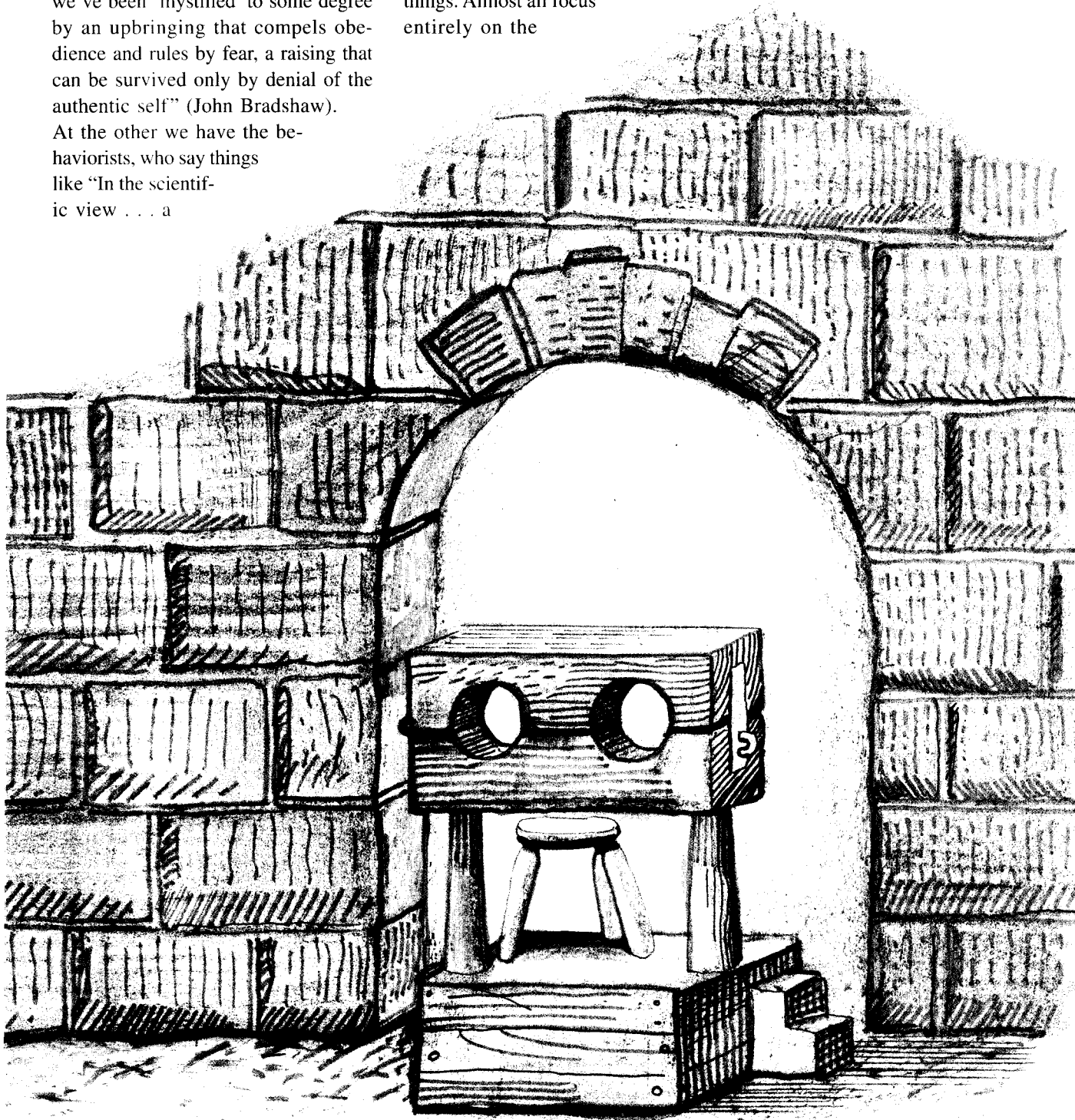
Psychologists and behavioral psychiatrists seem a diverse crew. At one end of the spectrum we have touchy-feelies who say things like “Any of us who were raised in the traditional patriarchal system have trouble relating because we’ve been ‘mystified’ to some degree by an upbringing that compels obedience and rules by fear, a raising that can be survived only by denial of the authentic self” (John Bradshaw).

At the other we have the behaviorists, who say things like “In the scientific view . . . a

person’s behavior is determined by a genetic endowment traceable to the evolutionary history of the species and by the environmental circumstances to which as an individual he has been exposed” (B. F. Skinner).

Bradshaw and Skinner seem to agree on little. It may come as a surprise, therefore, to learn that psychological pundits from Bradshaw to Skinner agree on several important things. Almost all focus entirely on the

individual. All reject what Bradshaw calls “fear,” Skinner called “aversive contingency,” and the rest of us call punishment. Nearly all psychologists believe that behavior is completely determined by heredity and environment. A substantial majority agree with Skinner that determinism rules out the concept of personal responsibility. This op-



position between determinism and responsibility is now widely accepted, not just by behaviorists but by every category of mental-health professional, by journalists, by much of the public—and by many in the legal profession.

Behaviorism is the most self-consciously “scientific” of the many strands that make up psychology. Although somewhat overshadowed recently by cognitive psychology and other movements, behaviorism has had overwhelming influence during most of the short history of psychology. Consequently, when behaviorists have produced hard evidence in favor of beliefs already shared by other psychologists, the combined effect has always been decisive. I will describe just such a confluence in this article.

About moral positions, argument is possible. But about scientific facts there can be no argument. Skinner, and the behaviorist movement of which he was the head, delegitimized both individual responsibility and punishment. Responsibility was dismissed by philosophical argument. Punishment was ruled out not by moral opposition but by supposedly scientific laboratory results. Less science-oriented psychologists and psychiatrists have agreed that punishment is bad, but the reasons for their consensus are more complex, and have to do with the social function of psychotherapy. Nevertheless, for the majority of psychologists and psychiatrists, the facts established by the behaviorists have always constituted an unanswerable argument—especially if these have supported pre-existing beliefs. This “scientific” consensus has had a devastating effect on the moral basis of American society.

I will argue, first, that there is no opposition between behavioral determinism and the notion of individual responsibility, and second, that the scientific basis for blanket opposition to punishment as a legitimate social instrument—in the family, the school, the workplace, and the judicial system—is nonexistent. My focus is Skinnerian behaviorism because it is the area of psychology that has been most concerned with large social issues. But the key

ideas have been carried forward by a much larger number of psychologists and psychiatrists who have never thought of themselves as behaviorists.

B. F. Skinner’s 1971 best seller *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* contains his most concerted, and successful, attack on traditional methods of social control. Most psychotherapists, behaviorist and nonbehaviorist alike, have come to agree with the substance of Skinner’s message: that punishment is bad and that the idea of individual responsibility is a myth. Skinner’s argument is simply wrong. It will be a task for future sociologists to understand why such a bad argument received such ready assent.

Skinner contrasted the “prescientific” view that “a person’s behavior is at least to some extent his own achievement” with the “scientific” view that behavior is completely determined by heredity and environment. The conventional view, he wrote, is that a person is free.

He is autonomous in the sense that his behavior is uncaused. He can therefore be held responsible for what he does and justly punished if he offends. That view, together with its associated practices, must be re-examined when a scientific analysis reveals unsuspected controlling relations between behavior and environment.

What’s wrong with this apparently judicious line of reasoning?

Freedom

IS man free? Well, as the professor used to say, it depends on what you mean by “freedom.” The bottom line is that you’re free *if you feel free*. Skinner’s definition is simpler: to him, freedom was simply the absence of punishment (“aversive contingencies”). But we are all “punished” by gravity if we seek to disobey its rules. The punishment can sometimes be quite severe, as beginning cyclists and skaters can attest. Yet we don’t feel unfree when we learn to skate or cycle. Punishment doesn’t always abolish freedom—and freedom is not just the absence of punishment.

Skinner had another definition of

freedom: absence of causation (“autonomous man”). This is an odd notion indeed. How can one ever prove the *absence* of causation? In science a conjecture like this is called a null hypothesis, and everyone accepts that such a thing is impossible to prove. We might prove the obverse, however: that people are unfree when their behavior is determined—that is to say, when it can be predicted. For example, suppose a rich and generous aunt offers her young niece a choice between a small sum of money and a large sum. In the absence of any contrary factors, the niece will doubtless pick the larger over the smaller. (Classical economics rests on the assumption that this will always be the choice made.) Can we predict the niece’s behavior? Certainly. Is her behavior determined? Yes, by all the usual criteria. Is she unfree? She certainly doesn’t feel unfree. People generally feel free when they follow their preferences, no matter how predictable those preferences may be. Behavior can be predicted in other contexts as well. Mathematicians predictably follow the laws of arithmetic, architects the laws of geometry, and baseball players the laws of physics. The behavior of all is determined; yet all feel free. Ergo, predictability—determinism—doesn’t equal the absence of freedom, as Skinner proposes.

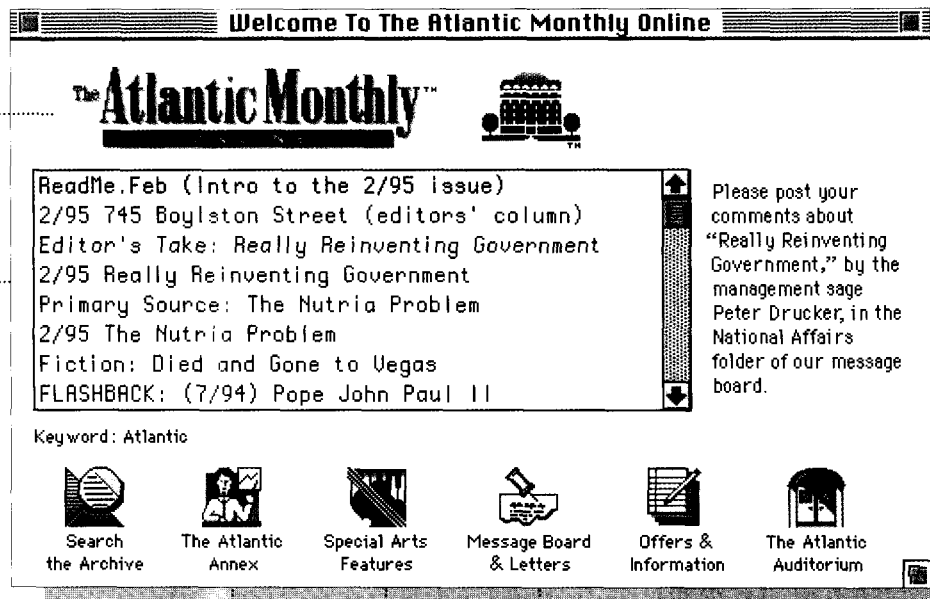
So even if we could predict all human behavior with absolute precision, this wonderful new science would have no bearing at all on the idea of freedom.

Punishment

THERE is another strand in Skinner’s assault on traditional practices—his attack on punishment. He rejected punishment not because it’s morally wrong but because it doesn’t work. (W. H. Auden had no such doubts about punishment when he remarked, “Give me a no-nonsense, down-to-earth behaviorist, a few drugs, and simple electrical appliances, and in six months I will have him reciting the Athanasian Creed in public.”) Since everyone

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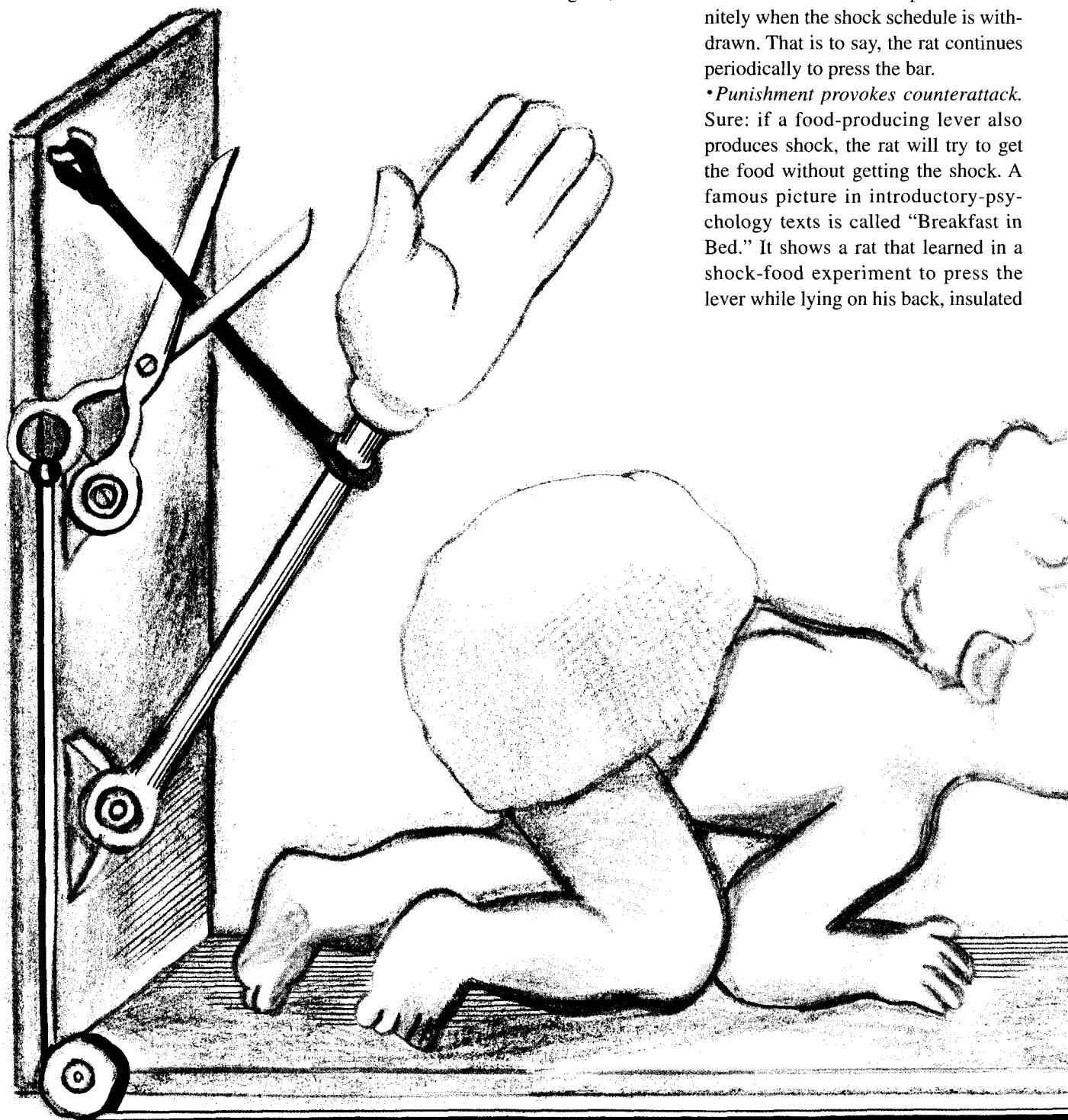
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knows that some punishments sometimes work, you may be curious to hear how Skinner defended his position. His argument boils down to three points: punishment is ineffective because when you stop punishing, the punished behavior returns; punishment provokes "counterattack"; positive reinforcement is better. Let's look at each of these.

•*Punishment is ineffective.* Well, no, it isn't. Common sense aside, laboratory studies with pigeons and rats (the basis for Skinner's argument) show that punishment (usually a brief electric shock) works very well to suppress behavior, as long as it is of the right magnitude and follows promptly on the behavior that is to be suppressed. If a rat gets a moderate shock when he presses a bar, he stops pressing it more or less at once. If the shock is too great, the rat

stops doing anything; if the shock is too weak, he may still press the bar once in a while; if it's just right, he quits pressing but otherwise behaves normally. Does the punished behavior return when the punishment is withdrawn? That depends on the training procedure. An avoidance procedure called shock postponement, in which the rat gets no shock so long as he presses the bar once in a while, produces behavior that can persist indefinitely when the shock schedule is withdrawn. That is to say, the rat continues periodically to press the bar.

•*Punishment provokes counterattack.* Sure: if a food-producing lever also produces shock, the rat will try to get the food without getting the shock. A famous picture in introductory-psychology texts is called "Breakfast in Bed." It shows a rat that learned in a shock-food experiment to press the lever while lying on his back, insulated



by his fur from the metal floor grid. Skinner was right that rats, and people, try to beat a punishment schedule.

• *Positive reinforcement is more effective.* Not true. The effects of positive reinforcement also dissipate when the reinforcement is withdrawn, and there is no positive-reinforcement procedure that produces behavior as persistent as that produced by a shock-postponement schedule. Positive reinforcement also provokes counterattack. Every student who cheats, every gambler who rigs the odds, every robber and thief, shows the counterattack provoked by positive-reinforcement schedules.

There are other arguments on both sides, but the net conclusion must be that the scientific evidence is pretty much neutral in deciding between reward and punishment. Each has its advantages and disadvantages: punishment is better for suppressing behavior, positive reinforcement better for generating behavior; punishment tends to produce more-persistent behavior than rewards; and so on. If we wish to favor reward over punishment, we must make a moral, not a scientific, case.

Justice and Determinism

ALL this might be academic but for its impact on legal thinking. The opposition between determinism and responsibility, and the doubts cast on punishment, do seem to raise issues of justice. If the devil—or, at least, “my environment”—made me do it, surely I should be spared the rigors of just punishment (of dubious effectiveness in any case, according to psychologists). In the era of Lorena Bobbitt, Reginald Denny’s attackers, and the Menendez brothers, this argument evidently strikes a receptive chord in the hearts of American juries.

Too bad, because the argument is false. I’ve already argued that behavior can be both determined (in the sense of predictable) and free. I’ll argue now that the legal concept of personal responsibility is founded on this kind of predictability. Personal responsibility demands that behavior be predictable—not the opposite, as Skinner contended.

What is the purpose of judicial punishment? Legal scholars normally identify two purposes, retribution and deterrence. Retribution is a moral concept, which need not concern us here. But deterrence is a practical matter. Arguments about deterrence are clouded by ideology and the impossibility of deciding the issue by the methods of science. Nevertheless, there is a straightforward approach to deterrence that would much simplify a jury’s task.

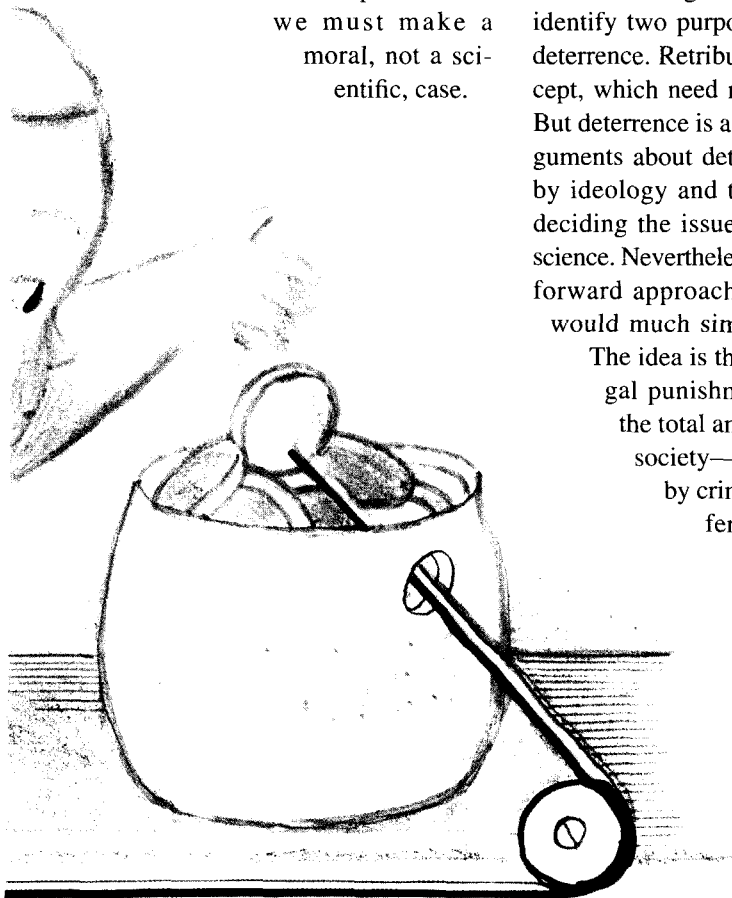
The idea is that the purpose of legal punishment is to minimize the total amount of suffering in society—the suffering caused by crime as well as the suffering caused by punishment.

The concept is simple: If thievery is punished by amputation, the level of thievery will be low but the level of suffering of thieves will be very high—high-

er, perhaps, than warranted by the reduction in theft. On the other hand, if murderers go free, the level of murder will be high and the ease of the killers will not balance the suffering of the rest. We may argue about how to measure suffering and how to assess the effect of a given level of legal punishment for a given crime, but the principle, which I call the social view of punishment, seems reasonable enough. It is consistent with the fundamental principle that government exists for the welfare of society as a whole, not for the good of any particular individual. Once they understand the argument, most people seem to agree that the social view of punishment is acceptable, although not, perhaps, the whole story. What people do not seem to realize is that this perfectly reasonable view is not opposed to determinism; it requires determinism.

From an objective point of view—the only legitimate point of view for science—“holding a man responsible” for his actions means nothing more than making him subject to punishment if he breaks the law. The social view of punishment assumes that people are sensitive to reward and punishment—that behavior is predictably subject to causal influences. If criminal behavior is predictably deterred by punishment, the justly punished criminal is less likely to disobey the law again, and serves as an example to other potential lawbreakers. This is the only objective justification for punishment. But if behavior were unpredictable and unaffected by “reinforcement contingencies”—if it were uncaused, in Skinner’s caricature of freedom—there would be absolutely no point to punishment or any other form of behavioral control, because it would have no predictable effect. In short, legal responsibility requires behavioral determinism.

It is interesting to reflect that the objective case for *personal* responsibility rests entirely on the beneficial *collective* effects of just punishment (on minimizing the sum total of human suffering). It does not rest on philosophical notions of individual autonomy, or personal in-



tent, or anything else at the level of the individual—other than normal susceptibility to reward and punishment. The idea that the law is somehow concerned with the mental state of the accused, rather than with the consequences of judicial action, has taken root because Skinner, like most other psychologists, focused almost exclusively on the individual.

If a person's "behavior is at least to some extent his own achievement," Skinner wrote, then he can be praised for success and blamed for failure. Since personal responsibility is a myth (he concluded), praise and blame are irrelevant. But if personal responsibility is defined as I have defined it, praise and blame need not—should not—be abandoned. In the social view, the use of praise and blame has nothing to do with the ontology of personal responsibility, the epistemology of intention, or whatnot. It has everything to do with reward and punishment (in other contexts Skinner admitted as much, at least with respect to praise). We praise good behavior because we wish to see more of it; we censure the criminal because we wish to see less crime. Praise and blame are perhaps the strongest incentives available to society. By giving them up, Skinner gave up our best tools for social order.

It is extraordinary that Skinner seems to have missed the connection between determinism and the sanctions imposed by the legal system. He spent his life studying how the behavior of animals is determined by the conditions of reward and punishment. He and his students discovered dozens of subtle and previously unsuspected regularities in the actions of reward and punishment. Yet he failed to see that the system of rewards and punishments imposed by society works in much the same way as his reinforcement schedules.

Remarkably, law and science seem to agree on the social view of punishment. Only when punishment is likely to be completely ineffective as a de-

terrent does the law limit its use. If the criminal is insane, or if injury was the unintended result of actions whose harmful outcome was unforeseeable, no guilt is attached to the perpetrator and no punishment is meted out—presumably because punishment can play no role in preventing a recurrence of the crime or the injury. There is surprising congruence between the legal concept of responsibility and the function of punishment as a deterrent. "Guilt" is established not so much by the act as by the potential of punishment to deter the act.

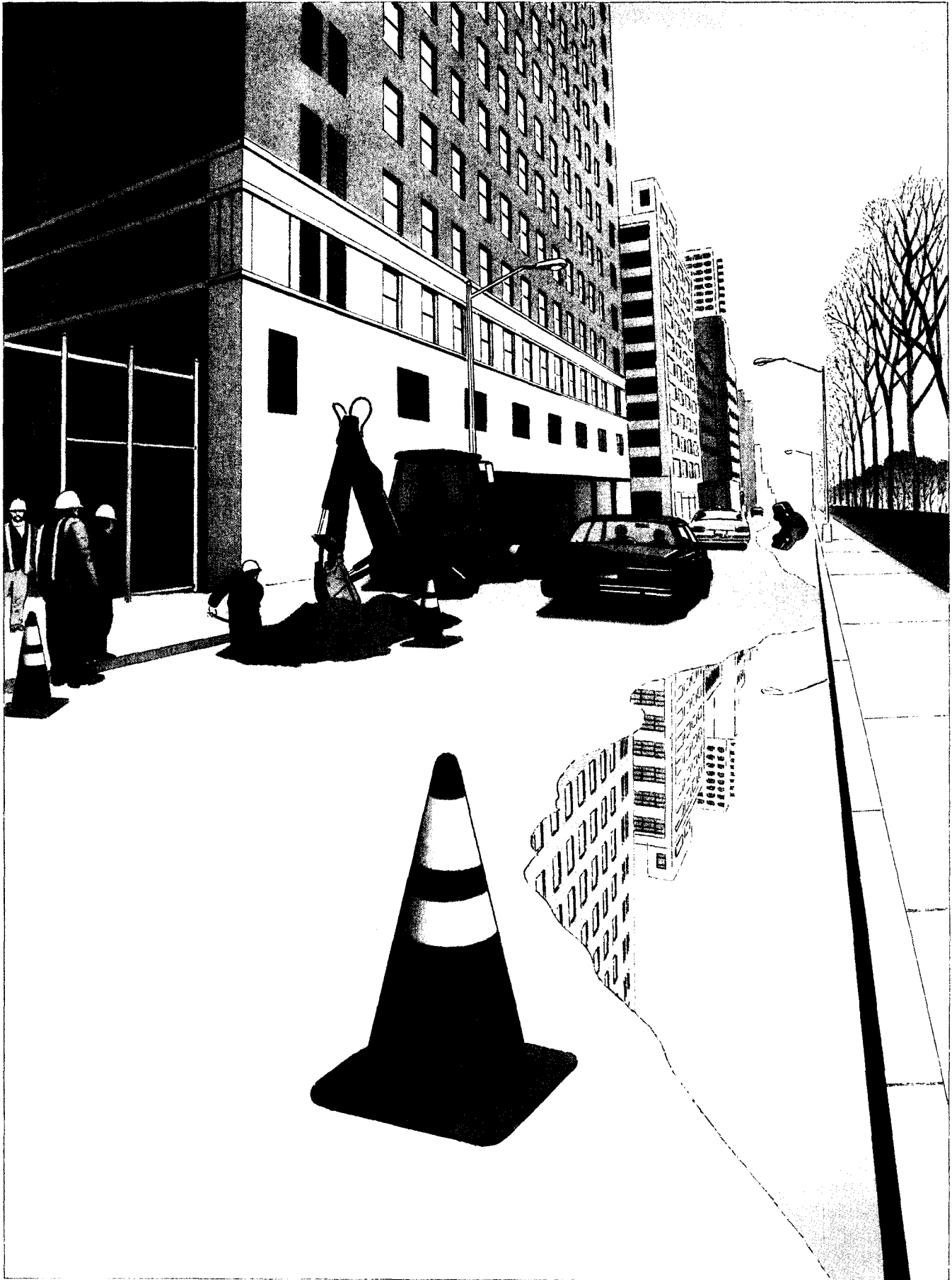
The "Victim" Defense: What Should the Jury Do?

THESE arguments greatly simplify a jury's task. Jurors have no need to puzzle through philosophical questions about intent or knowledge of right and wrong. Nor do they need to ask whether criminal behavior was determined by the defendant's history. (The scientific answer will almost always be yes, because almost all behavior is determined.) History is not the point. The point is, Did the defendant know that his actions would have an illegal outcome? And if he had known in advance of the act that sure punishment would follow, would he still have acted as he did? *If the criminal would have been deterred by the prospect of punishment*, the social view says, then he should be punished. Did the Menendez brothers know that their actions would result in the death of their parents? Presumably yes. If they had known that those acts would result in severe punishment (life in prison or death), would they have acted nevertheless? Probably not. Verdict: *Guilty*. On the other hand, if the jury had reason to believe that the defendants' history was so horrific that they would have murdered even in the face of certain punishment, then some other

verdict (which might still involve removing these damaged men from society) would be appropriate.

The Proper Role of Psychology

THE social view of punishment is as far as psychology can go toward prescribing social policy. Given a certain set of values, psychology may help us decide what system of rewards and punishments will be helpful in promoting them. But the social view of reward and punishment does not by itself prescribe social policy. Our value system, our morality, plays a legitimate role in measuring suffering, in evaluating known outcomes, and in judging the rightness or wrongness of particular rewards and punishments. We're less moved by the plight of the disappointed thief who breaks open an empty safe than by the suffering of a mugging victim, for example. Psychology can tell us a little (only a little, since we don't do such experiments on human beings) about the effects on individuals of corporal punishment versus the effects of a jail term; it cannot tell us whether corporal punishment is cruel or not. Social science can tell us that more people will be killed by guns if guns are freely available than if they are not; it cannot tell us whether the freedom to bear arms is an inalienable right. Psychology can tell us something about the extent of homosexuality in different cultures; it cannot tell us whether homosexuality is good, bad, or a matter of indifference. Psychology can also tell us that social opprobrium—Hester Prynne's A, blame, or the big red D some have proposed for drunk drivers—is often an effective deterrent. It cannot tell us whether such punishment is right or not. Scientific psychology, like all science, is amoral: it tells us what is or what might be—not what should be. Psychologists who offer more, promoters of the "authentic self" or punishment-free societies, are peddling not science but faith. ☼





Bridge Between Cultures

Chinese bridge players are ready to take on the world

THE Chinese are traveling down another unexpected path—this time into the specialized world of international bridge. Though they didn't start competing seriously until about fifteen years ago, the women's team has already finished third in the world championships (1991), and the men have placed fifth in the world open tournament (1993). In 1993 Chinese pairs had four of the ten best scores in the Epsom Worldwide Bridge Contest.

How and when did bridge come to the Middle Kingdom? By what means did the Chinese achieve international standing so quickly that they won the honor of hosting the world championships this year? Why do they care so deeply about a capitalist card game? The answers are both simple and instructive. Bridge began

to blossom in China in 1977, when Deng Xiaoping, a bridge maven who had learned the game when he lived in France, took power. The game spread widely, propelled not only by national politics but also by national character.

"Bridge is especially suitable for Chinese culture," says Kathie Wei-Sender, a Tennessee-based business-woman and former world champion. Known in China

as Yang Xiao Yen, Wei-Sender is a bouncy sexagenarian whose devoted work in behalf of Chinese bridge has made her a household name from Tianjin to Tibet. "Just as the Russians are good at chess, a game of solitude and isolation," she says, "the Chinese are naturals for bridge, a game that brings people together." Indeed, the Chinese use the literal translation of the word "bridge,"

"qiao": to *da qiao pai* (literally, "play bridge cards") connects people the way a suspension bridge links communities.

The game's chummy qualities must have attracted Chinese students who learned bridge while studying abroad in the twenties and thirties, because by the time of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, in 1949, they had popularized it in Chinese universities. During the Cultural Revolution playing bridge was politically incorrect. Deng was accused by propagandists of hiring a special railroad car for himself and his bridge cronies, flying them in when he became bored in Manchuria, and using state funds to construct a personal bridge club, where he would interrupt games only to place his "stinking signature," as his critics complained, on documents. As a Red Guard newspaper wrote, with a notable lack of finesse, "This club, with elaborate facilities for eating, drinking, and games, became Mr. Deng's hangout, where he enlisted capitulationists and renegades and gathered together demons and monsters."

Once the Gang of Four was overthrown, in 1976, and Deng assumed power, the game enjoyed such a rapid resurgence that Deng was named 1980 Bridge Personality of the Year by the International Bridge Press Association. Top Chinese players have routinely learned

by Jim Kaplan

enough English—the game's lingua franca—to compete at international events. In terms of strategy the Chinese are catching up to more-experienced American and European teams.

"Just as physical education keeps the body fit, bridge is exercise to keep the mind fit," says Li Wei, the vice-president of the Chinese Bridge Association (CBA), speaking with the solemnity usually reserved for references to Mao's swims in the Yangzi.

These days people know about *qiao pai* all over China, and top players have such extensive followings that the day of Chinese bridge groupies may not be far off. In the fall of 1993 I saw an exhibition match between the Chinese and British women's teams at a Beijing hotel, where a crowd of fans whispered and applauded when the bids and plays were relayed from the competition room to a Vugraph screen.

Although the Chinese didn't organize a national association until 1980, one in twenty of the country's million active players belongs to it—about the same percentage as that of Americans who belong to the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), which includes Mexico, Canada, and Bermuda. As the Chinese become increasingly skillful—whether because of inborn talent, education that is traditionally rigorous in numbers and memorization, a multicentury cult of perfection, or all of the above—the international aspirations that glint in Chinese bridge officials' eyes are said to be producing approval in a form more substantial than mere encouragement.

Opinions vary about the extent of this approval. All national-team members are amateurs holding full-time jobs, Tang Hou Zu, a Chinese women's coach, told me after I had watched a game with him at the exhibition. His senior player, thirty-eight-year-old Sun Ming, a little woman with a pageboy haircut and prominent cheekbones, sat smoking a cheroot. When I asked her what she did for a living, she said, "I play bridge." Technically Sun then had a job with the government sports association; it paid more than she made in her previous work, at a key-and-lock factory, and the work was far less time-consuming, leaving Sun with enough leisure to keep updating her seventy pages of notes on bidding and signals and to play regularly.

Other international competitors "work" for their regional bridge associations, or for companies. The top women's pair, Gu Ling and Zhang Yulin, are employed by the Pearl River Development Corporation, in Guangzhou, where their primary responsibility, according to Wei-Sender, is to play bridge wearing the company colors. "In the United States you have to do something to support your bridge," Wei-Sender says. "In China more than half the players are professionals."

The CBA, which receives 10 percent of its budget from the government, routinely contributes time-release salaries—vacation pay—when players are training, for four to six months a year. Other forms of financing are readily available. Because Deng, whose only remaining title is honorary chairman of the CBA, has played so many exhibitions with foreign celebrities, the Party hierarchy and the public have come to equate bridge prowess with political and industrial success. Thus factories and businesses sponsor both tournaments and players.

Chinese bridge also gets more than a little help from its foreign friends. In a fine show of hands across the water, Canadian and American experts, in particular, have taught Chinese officials and players everything from how to organize their tournaments to how to chest their cards. Last January the U.S. brokerage house Bear Stearns (which has offices in Shanghai and Beijing) sponsored the second annual Bear Cup in Beijing and donated \$25,000 to the CBA. Subsequently James Cayne, the chief executive officer of Bear Stearns, himself a world-class player, paid for two Chinese teams to attend last year's Spring North American Bridge Championships, in Cincinnati.

NOT content simply to follow bridge tradition, the Chinese are breaking new ground in several areas. One of these is youth bridge. The average age of an ACBL member in the United States is believed to be close to sixty; a belated if heroic drive by the organization's education department has recruited some 2,000 youth and junior (under twenty-six) players over the past five years. Young urban Chinese, some of whom are now self-employed and can make their own work hours, appear in duplicate-bridge clubs at all hours. Bridge is even an elective in



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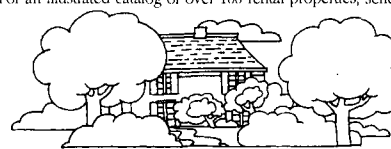
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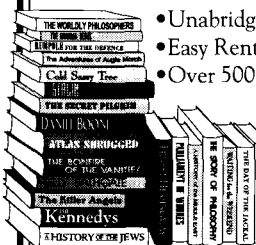


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the curriculum at Chinese middle schools, for youngsters aged twelve to eighteen. To encourage young players, bridge officials in all thirty-one provinces actively canvass, and they get the word out when a promising youngster is located. Last year Pan Kaijian, the national open-team coach, recruited twelve youths to play 600 hands over two weeks. After analyzing the subtleties of their play, he selected six for the national team.

The Chinese have been equally adventurous in bidding, developing innovative systems of their own. They are especially proud of Wei-Sender's late husband, the Shanghai-born C. C. Wei, for inventing the "precision system," which has been adopted in a number of other countries. As the name implies, the precision system relies heavily on the use of complex and precise statistics, which are duck soup to the Chinese.

Even the Chinese language lends itself to bridge excellence. For homework children routinely learn a row of characters—an assignment roughly parallel to memorizing a series of small paintings. Reproducing the characters on paper requires patience, perseverance, and pinpoint accuracy—all ideal qualities for a bridge competitor. Once you've learned several thousand characters, fifty-two cards is not an overbearing challenge.

This may explain why Chinese players, I noticed at bridge clubs, seldom sort their cards by the numbers. They toss down suits in haphazard heaps: 3 K 10 J 5. Presumably the cards rearrange themselves automatically in their heads.

Unlike Americans, who generally play their bridge at home, the Chinese tend to play during lunchtime at their workplaces and in clubs, because, in urban areas especially, apartments are small. Chinese games are unlike American ones in several other ways, too. Play begins on time. Instead of bellowing for a tournament director to deal with infractions, players issue friendly, gentle corrections. "Friendship first, competition second" is the stated motto. In contrast to the cacophony of bidding that precedes play in America, Chinese tables are eerily silent. Players, not all of whom speak English, either write their bids on specially designed slips of paper or pull number-and-suit bidding cards from boxes—a process that in the United States is used mainly at high-level tournaments, to ensure silent bidding.

The only duplicate game I played at which the atmosphere was less than soothing was a camera-rolling, flashbulb-popping VIP competition in the Great Hall of the People, where a government minister was regaled by his partner with all kinds of information that he shouldn't have been given, according to the rules, while opponents threw down their "Pass" cards with resigned shrugs. (What do you say to a government minister who breaks the rules at bridge? "Nicely played, sir.")

Will China eventually dominate the bridge world? Some experts say that bridge is more art than science, and that the Chinese tend to bid woodenly by the numbers rather than probe for a partnership fit. Bobby Wolff, the retired president of the World Bridge Federation, vehemently disagrees. "The only thing they lack is experience," he says. "It's even money whether they'll win a world championship by 2000." Eric Kokish, a bridge columnist and a Canadian expert who coached the Chinese teams in 1993, hopes the players can learn enough English to keep pace with the literature on state-of-the-art bridge. "The CBA is thinking big-time," he says, "and that is one reason they may win a world championship within ten years." Raymond Brock, a longtime member of the British team, is even more expansive. "This is a country that can build a road in six weeks," he says. "If they're determined, I think China will become for bridge what Russia has been for chess."

As for what bridge will do for China: "When I lecture in China, I tell people that bridge is an excellent way to learn capitalist management," Wei-Sender says. "Each hand is a contract, with an auction, bidding, and negotiating. The Chinese catch on quickly. The game teaches them to speak good English and become more competitive. It winds up being very good for the Chinese and for their friendship with other countries."

Broader analogies are only too obvious. China and the United States are struggling to normalize relations. Friendship first, competition second. In 1993 Wei-Sender took an American women's team to Beijing for a tournament and a special match with the Chinese women, which was broadcast on national television. No Ping-Pong diplomacy this time—we have bridge-building. ♣



A Voice for the Underdog

Studs Terkel's vanishing kind of decency is on display in a taped sampling of his radio show

FOR forty-two years, five hours every week, Studs Terkel has been the host of a music and interview show on WFMT, a Chicago radio station. In the six hours of *Four Decades With Studs Terkel* (four cassettes, High-Bridge, \$25.00) there are conversations with forty literary, musical, and intellectual figures, ranging from Dorothy Parker

by Jack Beatty

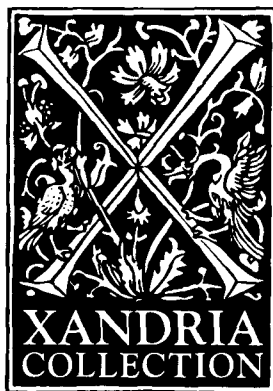
to Mahalia Jackson to Bertrand Russell—but no politicians. Why? “They’re so dull,” Terkel told me when I talked to him recently. “Now, if I could have interviewed Bob La Follette, Senator Norris, or Eugene V. Debs...” His cigar-cured voice trailed off, his point made.

Terkel’s parents operated a residential hotel for men near Chicago’s club and

theater district, and young Louis (that’s Studs’s real name) grew up in the vivid thick of opera, jazz, blues, and drama. After graduating from the University of Chicago Law School, Terkel became an actor. While he was a member of a Works Projects Administration writers’ project, he also appeared in the first production anywhere of *Waiting for Lefty*, Clifford Odets’s play about America in hard times. He played Joe, a tough cabdriver—a role for which his city-guy voice suited him. Terkel talks “city” the way Ross Perot talks “country.”

Indeed, for Terkel, talking city was the way up. It got him on 1940s radio serials—he was Butch Malone, gangster, on *Ma Perkins*, and again a gangster on *The Romance of Helen Trent*—and then it made him the DJ of his own music show, *The Wax Museum*, on which he played jazz, folk, opera (hamming up the libretti), and the blues. “I was the first white guy to play Mahalia Jackson,” he told me proudly. An acting job followed in an early television series called *Studs’s Place*, a live *Cheers* set in a Chicago restaurant. “We did TV Chicago-style,” he said. “Improvising.” Though the show was a hit, his sponsors—Manor House coffee—were nervous about Terkel’s politics. “I had signed my name to all kinds of petitions in the thirties and forties,” he explained. “I was against Jim Crow, for rent control, for ‘Friendship With Our Wartime Ally’”—the Soviet Union. Some of the originators and circulators of those petitions were Communists or fellow travelers: the enemy within, in the early fifties. A deputation from his sponsors called on him. Things could be made right if he would issue a statement saying he had been “duped” into signing. “But I wasn’t duped. I was against Jim Crow!” It wasn’t principle that kept him from recanting, he said. It was vanity: “I was too smart to be a dupe!” He was blacklisted from both commercial radio and TV. And of course it was principle.

Jobless, Terkel heard Woody Guthrie’s voice purling from his radio one night. That was the station for him. He called, asking if he could work there. It was WFMT.



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Bertrand Russell, interviewed in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, sounds so much like one of Dickens's squirrely-voiced old men—Scrooge, say, or the Aged P. from *Great Expectations*—that you cannot take his apocalyptic musings any more seriously than his pithy solution to the planet's ills: "The first requisite is world government, with a monopoly of all the major weapons of war; . . . great diminution of fanaticism; and . . . a raising of the level of the underdeveloped countries. Ultimately everybody should be at least as well off as people are in the United States." That answer conveys volumes about the Victorian world in which Lord Russell was reared—its firm grasp of first principles, its unshakable confidence. There is a similar historical suggestiveness in this 1972 exchange with Daniel Ellsberg:

Q: "When was *Pentagon Papers* first published?"

A: "June 13, 1971, a million tons of bombs ago."

Terkel asks Andrés Segovia why he decided to play the guitar and not "established instruments" like the violin and the

piano. Segovia replies in musically accented English that the pianists and violinists in his village were "very meedeecre." So bad, in fact, that a friend came to describe the piano as "a rectangular monster—he yells when we touch his teeth." Mortimer Adler is pompous. Barry Lopez is too lofty for Terkel: Lopez insists that hunting is a spiritual activity; Terkel asks, What about hunger? Busy Leonard Bernstein has to catch a plane. James Baldwin inhales, eloquently. Kenneth Tynan is wonderfully quotable. Zero Mostel and Mel Brooks are hilarious. Music leavens the talk and serves as a border between one talker and another. And there is the voice and persona of Studs Terkel.

WHAT is special about that voice? This: it is a voice for the underdog, a voice that often registers laughter but never derision. It has been a long time since I heard another radio voice so liberal and humane and yet so rooted. When the African-American poet and author Maya Angelou, in a moving interview, tells of how her grandmother was called by her first name by "the poor white trash" who farmed her land, I wondered, Will Terkel let that pass? Not a chance: "Victims themselves, victims themselves," he interjects, and Angelou, to her credit, quickly agrees. You can count on Terkel for that kind of decency. At a time when mockery and hatred of difference rule the radio dial, poisoning the hearts of America against pity and compassion in this era of majoritarian right-wing populism, Terkel's humanism and tolerance, his generosity of feeling, are worth a full-throated cheer. His social perceptions flow from his literary and musical culture, not from political correctness. Style, language, story, rhythm, voice, tone, laughter: these aesthetic qualities, these properties of language and music, have made him feel more. Feeling more, he sees more. Seeing more, he cares more. The arts and humanities, his example suggests, are the proper stuff of character education. Certainly they have wrought a beautiful character in him. (Terkel's eighth oral history, *Coming of Age*, will be published by The New Press in the fall.)

Interviewees depicted on page 99, clockwise from top left: Mel Brooks, Zero Mostel, Andrés Segovia, Margot Fonteyn, Bertrand Russell, James Baldwin, Arthur Miller, Maya Angelou, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Toni Morrison, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Leonard Bernstein.

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HONORÉ de Balzac, the Napoleon of realism—the title is obvious but apt. In ambition and flair, wit and will, Balzac and Napoleon are a Castor and Pollux of modern literature and politics, stout builders and rulers of vast personal empires. Born in Tours in 1799, thirty years Napoleon's junior, Balzac grew up inspired by the Empire's grandiose style. As Napoleon marched through Europe, Balzac strode through the salons of Paris, jeweled canes his scepters of power. Napoleon won his empire on the battlefield; Balzac won his at his desk, writing through long nights alone, wrapped in a monk's robe, drinking black coffee as thick as soup while the city slept. Balzac's pen was his sword; he took each page by storm, a struggle he described himself:

Memories come up at the double bearing the standards which are to lead the troops into battle. . . . The artillery of logic thunders along with its supply wagons and shells. Brilliant notions join in the combat as sharpshooters. The characters don their costumes, the paper is covered with ink, the battle has begun. . . .

The dandy Napoleon, however, saw his empire fall to ruin in his lifetime; Balzac was busy building his series *The Human Comedy* when he died, in 1850, and it stands today as one of the seven wonders of world literature: a hundred novels and stories that stage fifty years of French history, the Revolution through Louis Philippe, in a sprawling, meticulously dressed Tivoli garden through which readers stroll while all about impeccably costumed actors play out hard-



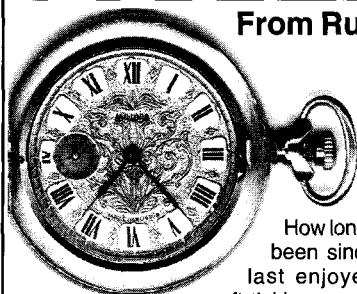
bitten tales of heartbreaking passion. If Napoleon fathered the modern nation-state despite his brief glory, the long reign of Honoré the First over his splendid kingdom gives us all the more reason to declare Balzac the father of modern realism.

Balzac's forebears, Cervantes, Rabelais, and Fielding, convey the flavor of a looser time, when books and life wan-

dered to their ends, country dominated city, and nobles ruled all. In Balzac commerce and industry have shifted the social center from country to city; books and life move at a quicker, tenser pace to better-defined goals; and any man with money and daring has power. Balzac's precise pictures, his scientific social analyses and tight plots, are gifts he bequeathed to the realists who came after

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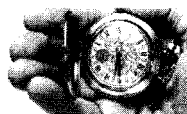


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him. The fictions of Trollope, Eliot, Zola, Tolstoy, James, Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, George Orwell, John O'Hara, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Tom Wolfe, to name a scattered few, testify to how well Balzac taught writers to convey the scramble for money and social position, the fads and fashions in art and idea, that motivate urban life; how, in short, to build a working model of the modern world with words.

"I like exceptional beings," Balzac wrote to his friend George Sand. "I am myself one." The story of Balzac's rise from garret to greatness overflows with the epic quality of his novels, yet, as Graham Robb points out in this new biography, the novelist was also a pioneering self-promoter and media manipulator who invented his own legend. The famous garret, for example, was "a room on the respectable third floor." Robb's biography is the first major life of Balzac to appear in English since Norman Denny's 1965 translation of André Maurois's *Prometheus: The Life of Balzac*, and it does much to bring Balzac down to earth from the Olympian heights where Maurois placed him. In Robb we see a Balzac who was often sick and who died of overwork, who had bouts of borderline insanity and flirted with homosexuality. His tales were less invention than his own life rewritten, often to wreak wish-fulfillment revenge on women who had scorned him. Maurois's Balzac, in contrast, is a noble soul, and *Prometheus*, an elegiac final work by a master biographer, reads like a loving salute across the centuries from one French writer to another. Robb's life, I think, is the lesser book. In *Prometheus* minor characters—Zulma Carraud, for example, a provincial woman who had a long sexless friendship with Balzac and nagged him into doing some of his best work—become full-blooded people. In *Balzac*, Carraud and many others remain ill-sketched figures filling niches in Robb's quasi-psychoanalytic schema. The nitty-gritty details Robb gives of Balzac's wheeling and dealing (he wrote many of his books' best reviews) provide a welcome dose of unsentimental recent research, yet his debunking of Balzac's mystique seems at times a heavy-handed attempt to strip away clouds of glory that Balzac truly earned by fecund genius and heroic effort.

Sweet or sour, both biographies tell the

compelling story of a lonely, lumpy boy neglected by an eccentric father and a self-absorbed mother. As a novice writer, Balzac did freeze in bare Latin Quarter digs, garret or no. He first tried to tell Oliver Cromwell's story in classical alexandrine couplets; in *Lost Illusions*, his novel about literary Paris, Balzac recorded the typical fate of unknown poets approaching publishers:

"Monsieur, I have also a volume of poetry . . ."

"Poetry!" Porchon angrily exclaimed. "Who do you take us for?" He laughed in his face and vanished into the back premises.

When grinding out pseudonymous thrillers failed as a get-rich-quick scheme, Balzac tried to become a printer-publisher himself, a disaster that saddled him with debts he never shook off. Only with *The Chouans* (1829), a romantic tale of the Revolution in Normandy, much inspired by Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper, did Balzac begin to find himself, and his public, as a writer. *The Shagreen Skin* (1831) dramatized his great motive—"Desire"—with the metaphor of a magic skin that grants its owner every wish but shrinks his life with each one. A series of concise novellas followed, sketches leading to *Eugénie Grandet* (1833) and *Père Goriot* (1835), the first two masterworks, one provincial, one Parisian, of fathers and daughters, love and greed.

Both were best sellers, and henceforth Balzac was a celebrity, fêted all over Europe and the recipient of adoring letters from women. One from Odessa in 1832, signed "The Stranger," sparked the love of Balzac's life with the Polish countess Eve Hanska. (The romance ended sadly: after years of loving by secret letters and in infrequent meetings until Hanska finally became a widow, they married in 1850, just months before Balzac's death.) While writing *Père Goriot*, with Hanska as his fresh muse, Balzac had the inspiration for *The Human Comedy*: he could change the name of his hero from Masiac to Rastignac, and then *Goriot* could be the younger years of Eugene de Rastignac, *The Shagreen Skin*'s world-weary man-about-town. If he continued other characters—the good doctor Horace Bianchon, the dandy Henri de Marsay—from book to book, he could group all the

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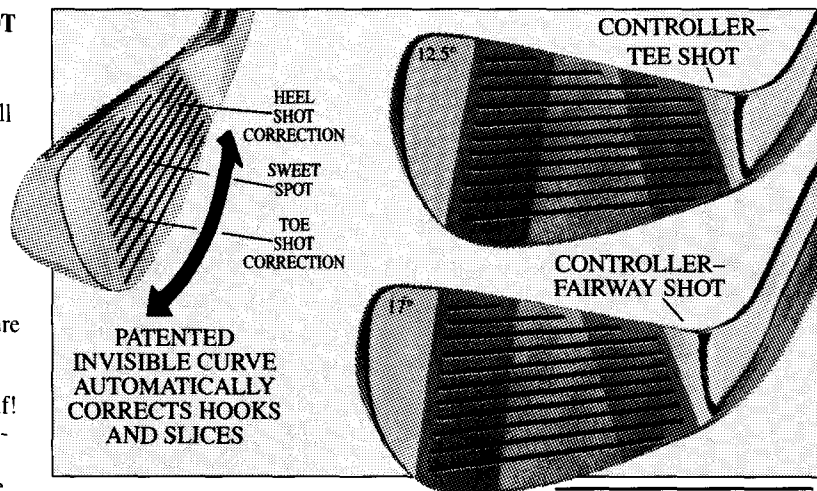
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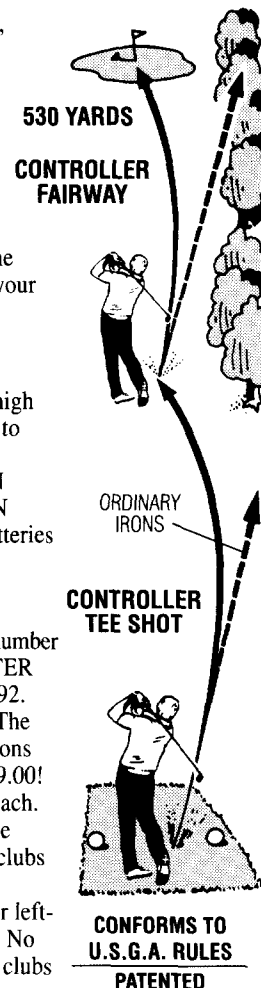
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novels in a single frame and thereby, as he wrote Hanska, paint "a complete picture of society from which nothing has been omitted." "Salute me," he burst in on friends one day to say. "I am on my way to becoming a genius."

Thereafter Balzac pushed ahead on many new works at once, tinkering constantly with earlier works to bring them into The Human Comedy's overall plan. The size of The Human Comedy dwarfs other novelistic series; the only novel grouping that comes close, to my knowledge, is Anthony Trollope's twelve linked Barsetshire-Palliser novels, from *The Warden* to *The Duke's Children*. Unlike Trollope's opus, however, The Human Comedy mixes short works with long, such small canvases as the sublime novel-la *A Princess's Secrets* with great tapestries like *Cousin Bette*. The Comedy is not a serial (its stories overlap in time so subtly that we can float back and forth over the entire era as an ever-present whole), nor did Balzac build his structure around one central character, as Trollope progressively did with Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium. Paris itself is Balzac's central character; major figures in one novel may never appear elsewhere, while a minor figure like the lawyer Desroche may pop up everywhere but seldom take center stage. This constant shifting from close-up to long shot on the Comedy's cast of more than 2,000 adds greatly to its verisimilitude. We know Balzac's characters as we know people in our daily news and neighborhoods, in and out of the headlines, in and out of our lives.

TROLLOPE and Balzac are most alike as omniscient authors, but here Balzac surpasses his English heir. Balzac assumed by "right of genius," as Theodore Dreiser put it, "intimate and irrefutable knowledge of all subjects," and could dispose of the knottiest philosophical or social problem in an "easy and off-hand" manner. Balzac's claim to have been the world's greatest expert seems at times a showman's bluff, one part fact, ten parts intuition; even Dreiser, his greatest American disciple, allowed that the master could be "somewhat pompous." Yet Balzac is a teacher generous with his knowledge, and we wander through his realm with him ever at our elbow, discoursing volubly on each locale: in *At the Sign of the Cat and Racquet*, for exam-

ple, "halfway down the Rue Saint-Denis" he points our eyes to a worm-eaten placard hanging before a cross-beamed draper's shop and expounds its history back to the sixteenth century.

Balzac's omniscience charms us as it convinces us. He flatters readers by deeming them confidants worthy of his intellect; his flood of facts and figures flattens skepticism. Setting his novels in precise real time ("About three o'clock in the afternoon, one day in October 1844," *Cousin Pons* begins), Balzac interwove his imaginary events with contemporary history, describing the era's major upheavals from many points of view and analyzing them in trenchant essays. Just as important, Balzac packed every page of The Human Comedy with priceless nuggets concerning how the French walked and talked and dressed and ate. In *Eugénie Grandet* we learn that Belgians traded gold for wine at Saumur in 1821, in *Cousin Pons* that pianos and "the inventions of Sax"—that is, saxophones—came into Parisian orchestras about 1830, and in *César Birotteau* that although the Rue des Lombards was the center of the city's wholesale nut trade, the one place to get genuine Provençal filberts stood in the Rue Perrin-Gasselin.

IN *Lost Illusions*, Balzac's knowledge is more "intimate and irrefutable" than in any other novel. The world this magnificent book describes is the literary France in which Balzac himself labored, and he knew inside out the journalists and geniuses, poets and publishers, who fill its pages. Not surprisingly, Robb and Maurois both mine *Lost Illusions* more deeply than the other books for biographical details and flavor. To me, it is the central masterpiece of The Human Comedy. *Cousin Pons* is my sentimental favorite, *The Black Sheep* my bitter one, but *Lost Illusions* is my Balzac for all seasons. No other novel is more worldly than *Lost Illusions*; here aplenty are the calculating countesses, misers, and millionaires who delight us in all of Balzac. And no other Balzac novel is more taken up with writing in all its phases—so much, as deconstructionists say, a text about the text.

Ever bold, Balzac stated his theme in *Lost Illusions*'s first sentences. "At the time when this story begins"—May, 1821—

the Stanhope press and inking-rollers were not yet in use in small provincial printing-offices. Angoulême, although its paper-making industry kept it in touch with Parisian printing, was still using those wooden presses. . . . Printing there was so much behind the times that pressmen still used leather balls spread with ink to dab on the characters.

Thus Balzac quickly set his period, the Gutenberg past becoming the industrial future; peppered his text with writing words—"press," "printing," "paper" "ink"—and opened an encompassing view of writing as less an art practiced by dreamers, quill pens in hand, than a manufacturing process connected to a national economy. In the new era, as Balzac put it, books were to publishers "like cotton bonnets to haberdashers, a commodity to be bought cheap and sold dear."

Balzac gave his story a dual structure: two characters, two cities. Lucien Chardon and David Séchard, friends in provincial Angoulême, are young men on the threshold of life who read each other new works by Schiller and Byron, and dream of glory. Romantic Lucien, an aristocratic De Rubempré on his mother's side, thirsts for fame as a poet. Practical David hopes to invent a new paper made from plant pulp. Trailing his patroness, Louise de Bargeton, Lucien sets off for Paris; when she abandons him, he rents a garret for fifteen francs a month and starts to write. First he makes friends with the noble-hearted writer Daniel D'Arthez, but he soon slips into the cutthroat world of the *petits journaux*, led by the cynical critic Etienne Lousteau, who sneers that fame is a "flashy, insolent courtesan" and shows Lucien where to sell his review copies.

Lucien's descent to gutter journalism becomes *Lost Illusions*'s primary story line. Following him step by step, Balzac painted an eyewitness picture of the city seedbed that, in heat and slapdash haste, was giving rise to modern literature. The Wooden Galleries, a shantytown of rickety shops crammed together in the center of Paris, "the home ground of publishers, poets, pedlars of prose, politicians, milliners and, lastly the prostitutes," is the heart of this inky world, and its rude vitality stirred Balzac to seventeen pages of virtuoso visual description. Set around an "untended garden watered only with fetid fluids," the shops reminded him of

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"bee-hive cells," "a gypsy camp or the booths on a fairground," all "wonderfully in keeping with the teeming variety of trades carried on . . . noisy with babble and hectic with gaiety."

Meanwhile, back in Angoulême, David slaves secretly on his new paper, a patent worth millions, he explains to his sweetheart, because the growth of literacy has created a demand for paper far outstripping France's supply of cotton rag. Machiavellian paper manufacturers, the Cointet brothers, get wind of David's work and lie in wait to steal the invention as soon as he completes it. Their plot against David, the novel's second story line, ranks high among Balzac's many and justly famous venal schemes; we watch hypnotized by horror as the Cointets wrap slow-squeezing coils of debt around the hapless inventor. The novel climaxes when Balzac re-connects the story lines with a twist of irony: done in by the hacks who first puffed him up, Lucien stumbles penniless back to Angoulême just as the Cointets throw David into jail for not paying a loan note that Lucien, fighting to keep his game going, had forged with David's name.

Balzac kept his two-character, two-city structure distinct. "The contrast between . . . the two men was so strongly accentuated that it might have tempted a painter to take up his brush," he declared in first describing his heroes. David is "tanned brown," Lucien has the "whiteness of a woman's skin"; David has "black hair," Lucien's is "fair"; David's chest is "broad," Lucien is "slender." Little Angoulême and huge Paris contrast in countless descriptions, and even within Angoulême there is a contrast between the old noble city above the river Charente and the bustling bourgeois port on the river's edge: "two social zones, everywhere and constantly hostile to each other."

The contrasts of Paris—D'Arthez and Lousteau, garret and salon, grisette and grande dame—overwhelm Lucien. At the Wooden Galleries he sees how the prostitutes' "gleaming flesh of shoulders and bosoms stood out amid the almost invariably somber hues of male costumes." In Angoulême, Lucien and Louise are avant-garde, he a dandy, she the hostess of the town's only salon, and they believe each other's pretensions. In Paris, however, as Balzac described in parallel scenes only pages apart, the scales fall from their eyes.

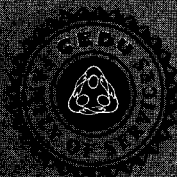
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The contrast between Lucien and Châtelet was too blatant for Louise not to be struck by it. . . . His frock-coat, too short in the sleeves, his cheap provincial gloves and his skimpy waistcoat gave him a prodigiously ridiculous appearance in comparison with the young men in the dress circle.

Proximity with a woman of fashion . . . was so prejudicial to her . . . that Lucien . . . at last saw [Louise] for what she was . . . a tall, desiccated woman with freckled skin . . . angular, affected, pretentious, provincial of speech and above all badly dressed!

Through contrast, in a word, Lucien was "losing his illusions about Madame de Bargeton while Madame de Bargeton was losing hers about him."

I find it remarkable that in a book so much about writing, contrast is the great revealer. For how do all the characters and scenes of *Lost Illusions* come to life in my mind? By my seeing the contrast of black letters against a white page! Balzac even personified this, writing's ultimate contrast, in his contrasting central characters: Lucien the writer is ink, David the inventor is paper.

Here, too, is *Lost Illusions's* ultimate unity: writing weds ink and paper, and contains its own contrast just as *Lost Illusions* contains David and Lucien, Angoulême and Paris, D'Arthez and Lousteau. For all its excitement, Lucien's career (continued in *A Harlot High and Low*) is one bubble in the yeasty ferment of Parisian journalism; David's invention, Balzac observed in conclusion, is "assimilated into French manufacture as food is assimilated into the body of a giant." All the contrasting characters play a role in one drama, and all their conflicts push to one creation: the birth of writing in the age of industry. In the eighteenth century, Balzac declared through an impassioned speech by David, books were hand-printed vellum volumes found in aristocratic libraries. The urban middle class of the nineteenth century had changed all that. Now, Balzac predicted,

we are nearing the time when, as fortunes are equalized and so diminished, poverty will be wide-spread; we shall require cheap linen-wear and cheap books, just as people are beginning to require small pictures for lack of space in which to hang big ones. Neither the shirts nor the books will last, that's all. ☼

A Prophet Without Honor

by Robert V. Remini

THE KINGDOM OF MATTHIAS

by Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz.

Oxford University Press,
222 pages, \$25.00.

THE more historians dig into the antebellum era of American history, the more rich sources they discover to explain how we became the kind of people we are today. This book is a case in point. It is an extraordinary cache of information about the period from roughly 1800 to 1850. It is also a bizarre story: it has sex and sexual depravity, violence, murder, a courtroom drama, a media feeding frenzy, prostitution, lunacy, theft, religion (plenty of that), politics, social commentary, subtle humor, a fascinating if weird cast of characters, and a surprise ending. Furthermore, it is a true story—written with the sweep and narrative drive of a best seller. Strange as it may seem, two academic historians, Paul E. Johnson, of the University of Utah, and Sean Wilentz, of Princeton University, using such professional tools as footnotes and a note on sources, have produced a dazzling work of original history that is a joy to read.

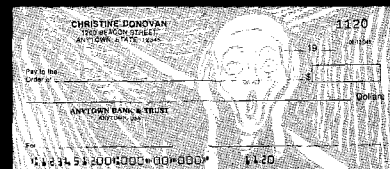
In the nineteenth century the American nation started moving quickly away from its European (mainly British) roots and building a new society that brought with it geographic expansion, swelling demand for greater democracy, a market revolution that converted the country from an agrarian to an industrial society, a frenzy of activity to reform existing social conditions and institutions, an outpouring of literary masterpieces, and an explosion of religious zeal known as the Second Great Awakening.

Around this time a new and vigorous evangelical movement developed in America, with a series of revivals or camp meetings that quickly became the rage of the nation. The movement reached its zenith in the 1820s and 1830s, under the

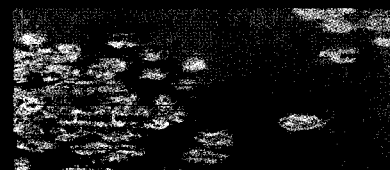
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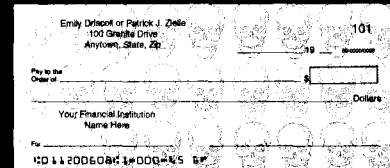
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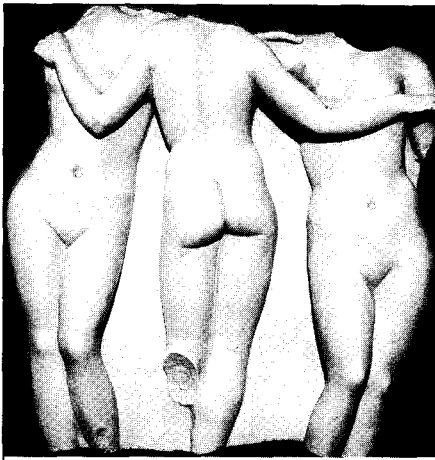
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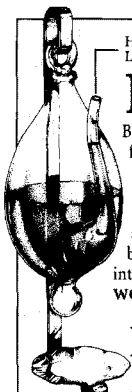
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TALES AND TREASURES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

mesmerizing influence of Charles Grandison Finney, who preached the ability of each person to achieve salvation by hearing the word of God and responding to His call. Away went the old Puritan ideas about the sinfulness of man and the wrath of God. Instead an individual's worth and dignity were emphasized. As the revivals grew in number and intensified in enthusiasm, they frequently ended in orgies of excess, with men and women weeping, tearing their hair, crouching on all fours and barking like dogs to "tree the devil," and rolling on the ground in a desperate display of repentance. Church attendance soared, with the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, and the Disciples of Christ gaining the most converts, particularly on the frontier and in rural areas.

Smaller groups went further in their religious zeal and claimed to communicate with the supernatural. They supposedly experienced the presence of God and cured the sick; they revealed new doctrines about the Divinity and even called on the dead to rise from their tombs. They set a pattern that subsequent prophetic movements emulated. Some even produced lasting religious institutions, among them Joseph Smith's Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons).

IN the midst of these evangelical sects many prophets appeared, including Smith, Brigham Young, and the central figure of this book, Robert Matthews. Born in 1788 in Cambridge, in Washington County, New York, of a Scots immigrant family steeped in Calvinism, Matthews allegedly amazed friends at an early age with feats of clairvoyance. He became a journeyman carpenter, moved to Manhattan, preached to whoever would listen, and was dubbed "Jumping Jesus" by shopworkers on Canal Street. He married, and fathered seven children. At first successful in trade, he ultimately failed because of illness and a contraction of credit by his New York wholesalers. Reduced to poverty and struggling to regain his health, he suffered violent fits, excruciating headaches, and sudden and uncontrollable rages. He regularly beat his wife, believing that a bad spirit had entered into her and traveled from her to others. A beating of five or six strokes with a rawhide served as the usual penalty. The beatings presumably drove the evil spirit from her. Finally he stopped working al-

together, took up evangelizing full time, and abandoned his family. One of the authors' most interesting and important observations is that the great revivals of the early nineteenth century came not from the middle class, as was once supposed, but from those "whom the market revolution had either bypassed or hurt."

Matthews finally decided that he was not a Christian at all but a prophesying Hebrew. He claimed that God had informed him that he was really Matthias, prophet of the Jews, sent to bring the holy word of God the Father to the world and gather the faithful to Zion. He let his hair grow long and he grew a beard, something quite unfashionable at the time. The fact that he was a carpenter with long hair and strange clothes encouraged people to see in him an uncanny resemblance to Jesus Christ.

In his wandering around the streets of lower Manhattan, Matthias sought out another zealot by the name of Elijah Pierson, a successful businessman who ran a mercantile establishment on Pearl Street. Pierson had talked with the Holy Spirit and, together with his wife, Sarah, had preached on street corners. They had formed the Female Asylum House, to minister to prostitutes, on Bowery Hill, and a Sabbath school in the Five Points area of the city. The couple had attracted a small but dedicated band of followers. Sarah Pierson's death, in 1830, sent her husband into an emotional tailspin. He tried valiantly to raise her from the dead, but she would not respond. Brokenhearted, emaciated from many orgies of self-denial, he came in contact with Matthias, who immediately confirmed what God had already told Pierson: that God had renamed Pierson Elijah the Tishbite, and that his spirit had been joined with John the Baptist's. Matthias also told Elijah that the Father's Kingdom had begun. He moved into the house of Elijah's friend Sylvester Mills, took over the best rooms for himself, and began preaching sermons that regularly drew fifty to sixty people into the house.

Matthias preached that he was the Spirit of Truth—the male governing spirit. He could take any shape or enter any body, including animals and plants. The gentiles and their effeminate world would burn; all real men would be saved; everything bearing "the smell of women" would be destroyed. This "Kingdom of Matthias" was a totally patriarchal society. "Woman," Matthias ranted, his arms waving, his

Why We Must Reduce Immigration From Over One Million to 100,000 a Year

It Makes No Sense for Our Nation to Permit Massive Immigration

We now allow over one million immigrants to settle here every year. If our fertility rate remains at 2.0, continuing immigration at that level would swell our population to nearly 500 million before the end of the next century. **That would almost double our present size!**

Such growth would be intolerable. It would destroy our environment, our standard of living and the quality of our lives.

With a present population of 262 million, our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. Yet we continue to grow rapidly, by 25 to 30 million each decade.

We Need to Halt and Then Reverse Our Population Growth

We at NPG believe that our goal should be to stabilize our U.S. population at no more than 150 million, its size back in 1950. We consider that to be the optimum size for our country.

We Americans do not have to agree now on the exact size of a smaller population, however, since any substantial reduction in numbers would take many decades to achieve. It is only essential that we agree on the urgent need to halt and reverse our population growth.

Immigration Must Be Drastically Reduced

Because we have allowed our nation to become seriously overpopulated we are in deep trouble. A quick and easy solution simply does not exist. To start on the path toward a smaller, more sustainable population, we must halt illegal immigration and sharply reduce legal immigration.

Accordingly, NPG strongly recommends that legal immigration be cut back from its present 900,000 per year to no more than 100,000, including all relatives, refugees and asylees. We further call for an all-out effort to reduce illegal immigration, currently estimated at 300,000 a year, to as near zero as possible.

Best Case Scenario: Low Fertility, Low Immigration

What would happen to our population if our fertility rate were gradually reduced from the present 2.0 to 1.5 by 2050, if illegal immigration were virtually halted, and if legal immigration were reduced in 1996 from the present 900,000 a year to 100,000 a year, as we advocate?

The bad news is that our population would still continue growing for another 25 years, peaking at 300 million in 2020. **The good news** is that by the end of the next century it would have declined to around 180 million. In a few more years it would reach 150 million and could be stabilized at that level, even allowing a slight increase in fertility and/or immigration.

This is the path to a smaller population that NPG advocates.

Another Scenario: Low Fertility, High Immigration

If our fertility were reduced as in the "best case" scenario, but immigration remained at its present high level, the picture would be far worse.

1. Our population would continue growing for another 55 years, peaking in 2050 at 337 million, **75 million more than we are now**. Our impact on the environment would accordingly be that much greater.

2. Even by the end of the next century, our population would still be 298 million, 36 million greater than it is today, **and 121 million larger than it would be under the "best case" low immigration scenario.**

This is a path that our nation cannot afford to follow. **Clearly, the level of immigration will have a tremendous influence on the eventual size of our population.**

We Cannot Rely on Fertility Decline Alone to Reverse Our Population Growth

Fertility rates are difficult to change and when they do change, they almost always do so very slowly. Furthermore, future fertility rates are unpredictable: they might well increase rather than decrease. Over the last 18 years, for example, the trend has been upward, from a low of 1.7 in 1976 to 2.0 in the last few years.

That is all the more reason why we must reduce immigration to a level consistent with our long-term national interest. Reducing immigration is a much faster and more certain way to get results than relying on fertility decline.

If we can persuade our government to act decisively **NOW** to halt illegal immigration — and to cut legal immigration from 900,000 to 100,000 a year — **we will at last be doing something** to brake runaway population growth in our country.

If you believe with us that immigration must be drastically curbed — and without further delay — then we ask you to work for this goal as a member of Negative Population Growth. We need your help.

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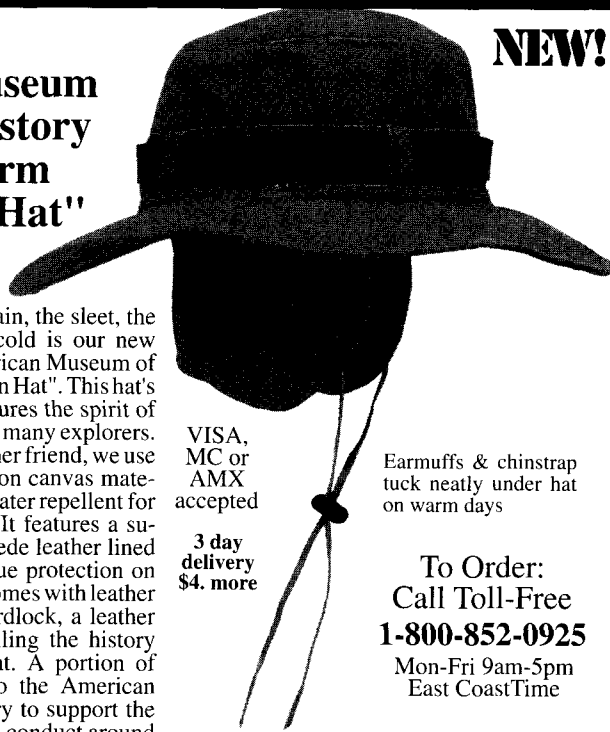
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b	A	D	E	L	I	N	E	D	A	E	M	O	N
	W	O	L	A	O	L	X	D	M	N	D	L	E
c	D	R	A	I	N	A	P	S	E	T	I	L	E
d	R	E	T	R	A	C	E	S	U	L	C	E	R
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e	E	R	O	S	N	I	T	R	O	T	A	R	O
f	P	I	N	T	A	C	A	N	I	S	T	E	R
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g	D	E	S	S	E	R	T	S	P	O	O	N	S
h	E	D	I	T	S	P	O	T	S	G	N	A	T

"Janus-Faced"

Across answers are given in the order in which their definitions appear. Across.

a. TORY; DEMOCRATS; ROT; COMEDY; STAR b. ADELIN; LEDA; ADENI; NOME; DAEMON c. ELITE; SPANIARD; APSE; TILE; DRAIN d. RECLUSE; CARTER; RETRACES; ULCER e. NITRO; ORATOR; TIN; EROS; SORE; TARO f. CANISTER; PINTA; CATNIP; RETSINA g. SNOOP; STRESSED; DESSERTSPOONS h. EDIT; TOPS; TIDE; SPOTS; GNAT; TANGS Down. 1. TAW-DRY 2. ODOR (hidden) 3. R(EL)ATIONS 4. DI(O)N 5. ENLAC-E (anag. + e) 6. O-DDS 7. C(A-ME)UP 8. RENT (double def.) 9. TOLLED (homophone) 10. SNEER (hidden) 11. LA-I(RD)S 12. EXPE(C)TANT (anag. + c) 13. DICTATION (anag.) 14. LETS GO (double def.) 15. B(RIB)ED 16. KNAVES (homophone) 17. ERNEST (anag.) 18. FORES-T 19. EP(O)DE (anag. + o) 20. T(oil)E-ST (rev.) 21. CARP (double def.) 22. I-MP'S 23. ETN-A (anag. + a)

voice shrill, "is the capsheaf of the abomination of desolation—full of all devilry." Christianity was the work of devils, and God the Father, in the person of Matthias, had returned to teach the truth.

With the money provided by his followers, Matthias lived like a wealthy man. He acquired one of the most extravagant wardrobes the people of Manhattan had ever seen. He paraded the streets decked out in a green frock coat with brass buttons and gold braid; a waistcoat of buff cashmere or silk; a red sash with twelve tassels, representing the twelve tribes of Israel; lace ruffles at his wrists and throat; brown, green, black, or white pantaloons; Wellington boots; a green three-cornered hat or a black leather "Merlin-the-Magician" hat; a fine two-edged sword; "an iron rod to rule the world"; and a great iron chain and key to lock up "Satan in the bottomless pit." He looked to some Manhattanites like a cross between a drawing-room dandy and a Spanish or Italian cut-throat. The police later discovered that the sword was inscribed with the words "*E Pluribus Unum*" and apparently had once belonged to an Army officer.

Matthias moved his headquarters to the home of Benjamin and Ann Folger, in Sing Sing, New York, on the banks of the Hudson, and renamed their house Mount Zion. Through prophecy and terror he controlled his followers, and with their money and labor he planned to make Mount Zion a perfect rural household for the coming of his Kingdom. He also impregnated Ann Folger, claimed her as his wife, and prophesied that the child she bore would become the Holy Son. Unfortunately, the baby was a girl.

THE collapse of the Kingdom came when the mentally deranged Elijah the Tishbite died under mysterious circumstances. Matthias was charged with fraud and murder, and the affair instantly became a public sensation of "unprecedented proportions." It hit the police blotter just as a new style of journalism, called the penny press, made its appearance. Benjamin Day, of the New York *Sun*, originated the penny press. He captured a mass circulation among the city's working classes by providing lurid accounts of American life instead of the customary political news and mercantile reports. And the Matthias affair had everything this new readership could desire: religion,

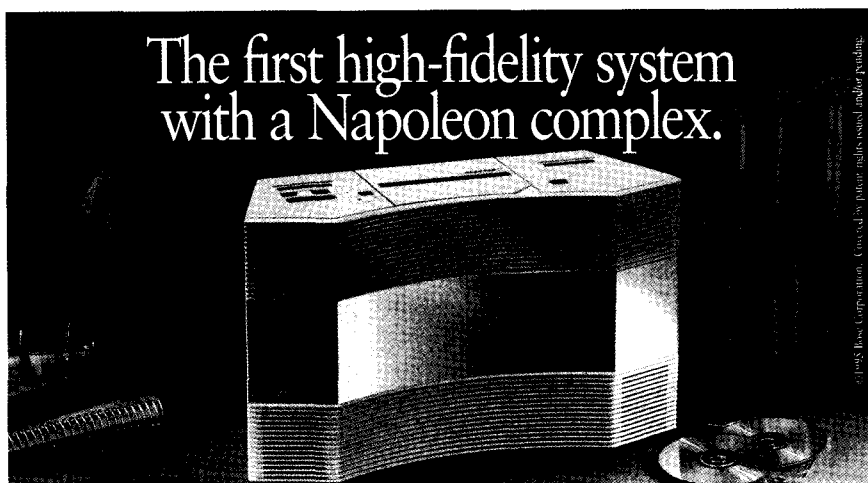
weird social behavior, "licentiousness and lust," sexual depravity, murder, and fraud. As the authors point out, historians of Jacksonian America focus their attention almost exclusively on the great political, economic, and social issues of the 1830s, such as slavery, abolitionism, nullification, the destruction of the national bank, and the rise of the Whig Party. But to judge from the New York papers of 1834 and 1835, the public craved only information about the Kingdom of Matthias.

The press described Matthias as a "miserable strolling driveller," part rogue, part fool, part lunatic, an "ignorant and ferocious impostor." In this "age of imposture," wrote another, it was not at all surprising that "such a barefaced impostor met with dupes."

The trials lasted four days and might have been shorter had Matthias limited his orations to relevant matters. The evidence against him did not hold up, thanks to the skill of the defense attorney, and the charge of murder was therefore dismissed. However, Matthias was imprisoned for three months in the county jail on an assault charge and given an additional thirty days for contempt of court.

Afterward Matthias wandered from place to place, met with the prophet Joseph Smith, preached to the Indians, and probably died in Iowa in 1841. The authors describe what happened to the other players in this incredible drama, and end with a striking and delightful surprise.

WHAT makes this study so extraordinary, aside from the fascinating story, is its depiction of a large slice of American life during a period of momentous social, economic, and political change. In addition to important religious history, the authors provide a great deal of detail about living conditions of the time. One small example: they point out that only in the grandest houses were there brick ovens. Most housewives knew nothing of baking or oven roasting. Meat was either spitted and cooked in a hearth or boiled in a pot. And pancakes and johnny-cakes, which served as bread in rural America, were cooked in the hearth. Not until the 1820s, when the market revolution introduced cast-iron stoves and such items as Caribbean sugar and Rochester white flour, were baked and oven-roasted foods possible in the average home.



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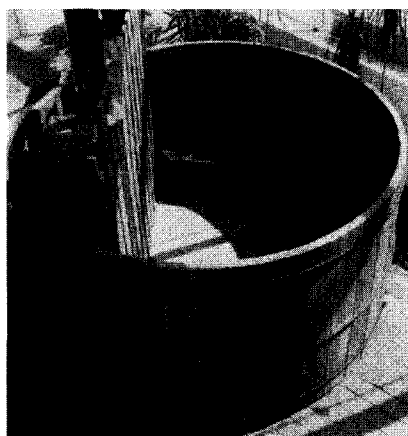
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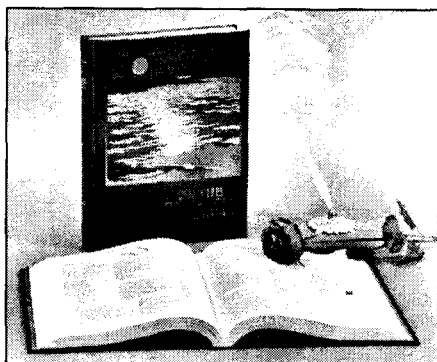
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Owings Mills, Maryland – The National Library of Poetry has just announced that \$24,000 in prizes will be awarded over the next 12 months in the North American Open Amateur Poetry Contest. The contest is open to everyone and entry is free.

"We're especially looking for poems from new or unpublished poets," indicated Howard Ely, spokesperson for The National Library of Poetry, "we have a ten year history of awarding large prizes to talented poets who have never before won any type of writing competition."

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Anyone may enter the competition simply by sending in one original poem, any subject, any style to:

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The poem should be no more than 20 lines, and the poet's name and address must appear on the top of the page. "Each poem received will be acknowledged, usually within seven weeks," indicated Mr. Ely. Every poet who enters will receive an evaluation of their artistry by the judges.

Possible Publication

Many submitted poems will also be considered for inclusion in one of The National Library of Poetry's forthcoming hardbound anthologies. Previous anthologies published by the organization have included, *On the Threshold of a Dream*, *Days of Future's Past*, *Of Diamonds and Rust*, and *Moments More to Go*, among others.

"Our anthologies routinely sell out because they are truly enjoyable reading," added Ely, "and they are also a sought-after sourcebook for poetic talent by the publishers, recording companies, and the media."

The authors also demonstrate how the story of Matthias affected American culture and literature. The penny press started the public appetite for the crime and sex stories that have obsessed newspaper readers down to the present. In press stories of urban crime Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman, among many others, found material for their subsequent literary creations. Several of them also used the material to explore the evil and depravity that

belied a common belief in American innocence and goodness.

Matthias, together with other prophets of his age, started something unique. Their remarkable revelations contributed substantially to one of the most extraordinary periods of "sectarian invention" that the United States has ever known. Unfortunately, such frightful events as occurred at Waco and Guyana can also be traced back to what happened in the Kingdom of Matthias. ☞

BRIEF REVIEWS



A Feather on the Breath of God

by Sigrid Nunez.
HarperCollins, 180 pages,
\$18.00.

The first-person narrator of this first novel is the daughter of an unprosperous Chinese and the German wife he acquired while serving in the Second World War. How and why this happened is a total puzzle to their daughter growing up outside New York City, where both her parents are uncomfortable aliens and she herself feels anchorless. The novel is an intelligent and poignant examination of social and erotic displacement, and written with such extraordinary and seemingly unstudied conviction that one accepts every word of it as the truth. An impressive debut.

Family Secrets

by William M. Murphy.
Syracuse, 540 pages, \$39.95.

Mr. Murphy is an acknowledged authority on the Yeats family—that is, "William Butler Yeats and His Relatives," whose activities are reported in this book. Mr. Murphy promises the reader factual information unencumbered by literary interpretation, art criticism, aesthetic estimate, or psychological speculation, and he keeps his word except on those occasions when he must decide which family member is

least mendacious. Willie and Lily and Lollie and Jack (officially William Butler, Susan Mary, Elizabeth Corbet, and John Butler junior) were the offspring of a marriage between Susan Pollexfen and John Yeats. The Pollexfens were business people with a high regard for money. They were non-intellectual, glumly pious, and socially glacial. The Yeatses were Anglo-Irish gentry, landowners and clergymen, merry idealists with a high regard for learning. The match would probably have been awkward in any case, but when John quit a promising legal career to become a painter, feckless finance and professional disappointment led to perpetual disorder. The children, however, were all successful in their separate ways—William as a poet, Jack as a painter, Lily and Lollie (sometimes referred to, with acid Irish wit, as the "weird sisters") in the revival of arts and crafts that accompanied the Irish renaissance. They met or knew or quarreled with almost everyone of note in Ireland at the time. The gossip and tensions and rivalries that Mr. Murphy has revealed are fascinating, while the financial maneuvers of the sisters amount to a small saga. Mr. Murphy has avoided posthumous psychologizing, but he cannot avoid genetic theory, for the Yeatses were very conscious of the incompatibility of Yeats and Pollexfen blood. John senior, broke in New York and the recipient of money from William,

put the family position neatly: "It was like a Yeats to send this money and make no fuss about it. It was like a Pollexfen to have it to send."

The Black Book

by Orhan Pamuk,
translated by Güneli Gün.
Farrar Straus Giroux,
400 pages, \$25.00.

On a winter day in Istanbul, Galip comes home from his languid law practice to find that Rüya, his wife and also his cousin, has run away. He assumes that she has taken refuge with her half-brother Jelâl, a widely read newspaper columnist, but Jelâl is also missing, from both the paper and his formal address. Galip goes sloshing through slush and grime in search of the errant pair. The novel is constructed in alternating chapters—one describing Galip's wanderings and the strange and garrulous people he meets, who all tell him strange stories; the next reproducing one of Jelâl's old columns, which also contain stories and which Galip studies in the hope of finding a clue to the writer's whereabouts. The flow of seemingly unrelated tales suggests a *Thousand and One Nights* kaleidoscope, but there is a single concern underlying the shifting surface, and that is the question of identity—What is it, what is its value, what stability does it have? Jelâl's name derives from that of a medieval mystic and poet who advised, "Appear as you are, be as you appear. You are not this body, but a spiritual eye—what the eye of man contemplates it becomes." Jelâl describes, and Galip experiences, a state in which each is watched by a disembodied eye that is also what it watches. Jelâl refers frequently to historical figures and to Hurufî, a mystical sect practicing a method of divination based upon numbers assigned to letters of the alphabet. Galip tries the method on Jelâl's columns without success. It is likely that only a Muslim or an Islamic specialist can grasp all the implications that the author has embedded in his brilliantly shifting text, but one of them must be Turkey's difficulty in maintaining national identity in its Janus-faced position as the western fringe of the Middle East and the eastern fringe of Europe. With the questions it raises and the author's satirical jabs at literary critics, imported fads, civic authorities, and "small towns where they're big on their religion and their

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Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") Can Israel survive without it?

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What are the facts?

The Root of the Conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan"; it calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of Territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over \$50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—

enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab states possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is

an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile

Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen

Palestinian Arab terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time", neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank".

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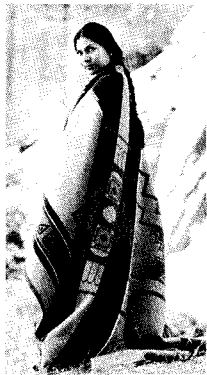
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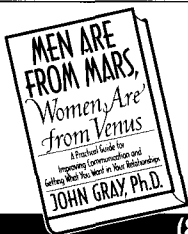
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Great Women of the Bible

by Dorothee Sölle, Joe H. Kirchberger,
Herbert Haag, and others.
Eerdmans, 295 pages, \$75.00.

Representations of biblical women in art and literature are the announced focus of the authors. The text includes relevant excerpts from the Bible, rather summary accounts of the use made of such texts by authors from early times to our own, and commentaries of a contemporary feminist character which naively stress the obvious and cannot be considered either literature or art. The illustrations provide a vivid record of the styles in which differing cultures have visualized scriptural heroines and victims. There is also generous material on nonbiblical legends and traditions from the Middle East.

The Hippopotamus

by Stephen Fry.

Random House, 304 pages,
\$22.00.

Mr. Fry's novel, an odd mixture of the sentimental and the ribald, is in the end a comedy in praise of sex, alcohol, kindness, and common sense, items that the author considers interdependent. Readers who cannot tolerate that view had best avoid the book—but they will be missing some real fun.

Noah's Choice:

The Future of Endangered Species

by Charles C. Mann and
Mark L. Plummer.

Knopf, 336 pages, \$24.00.

This book grew out of the authors' January, 1992, cover story for *The Atlantic*, "The Butterfly Problem."

The History of the Blues

by Francis Davis.

Hyperion, 224 pages, \$24.95.

The chapter on Robert Johnson in this book originated as an article titled "Blues Walking Like a Man," in the April, 1991, issue of *The Atlantic*.

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams

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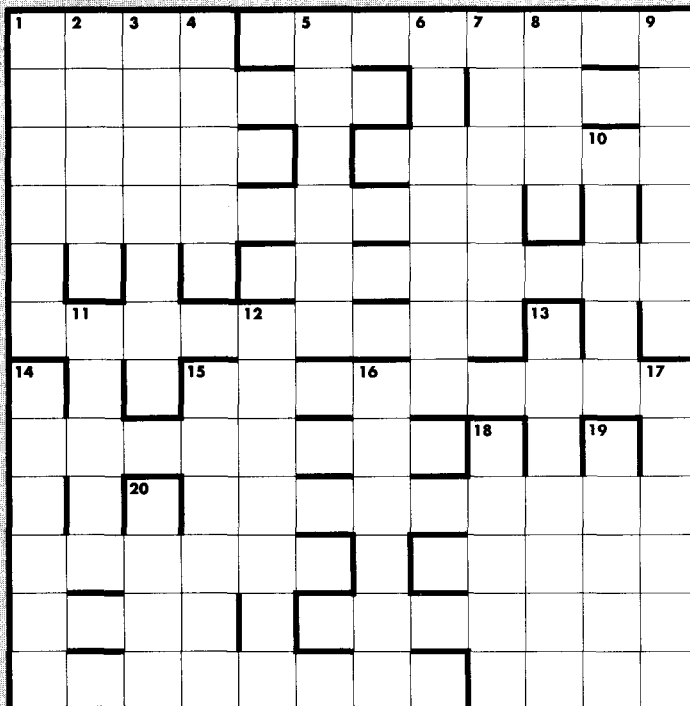
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Cryptic Personals

Solvers sometimes send us solicitations of a personal nature, evidently in hopes of meeting other solvers of like disposition. We cannot run these blurbs as a regular service, but in commemoration of Valentine's Day we have reproduced several typical samples below, to which solvers may respond amorously if they wish. These personal notices compose the 18 Across clues to this month's puzzle, if you can believe it. The clues are strung together in random order with no superfluous words connecting them. In locating the 18 answers in the diagram, solvers may be aided by the Downs, which are normal. In all, answers include four proper nouns.

*See page 13 for Puzzler contest details.
The solution to last month's Puzzler
appears on page 110.*



Across

English woman with children wants to have male for novel sort of get-together, with a bit of relaxation and drink

Bold engrossing and exceptional writer, sings like a rap star, likes dancing more, can love a female who inspires poetry and art

Republican entertainer seeks a Democrat having a kinky degenerate demand

Independent, penetrating silent type, black, pursuing ski bum appropriate for smooching with

Popular German hockey player, non-smoker and non-drinker, eats bran, crazy about Italy's capital, seeks horticulturist

Somewhat shy single man, composer,

part regressive, dislikes meat, has an unusually smart following, taste for meeting lovers secretly

A Virginia sailor, a god in human form, a playboy, into dogs and cats and birds, wanting massaging, talking

Down

1. Temporarily settle for new PC name (6)
2. Singer from top of mountainous island (5)
3. Losing heart, make a certain amount of music (7)
4. In personals, perhaps, it entrances (5)
5. Fire visible? So you say (6)
6. Something happening interrupts quiet chord (7)
7. A city district's prizes (6)

8. What a dog might do: bay aloud (4)
9. Is sorry about beheaded birds (6)
10. A mostly boring time with grown-up (5)
11. A large room occupied by a spook (5)
12. Best street south of town in New Hampshire (7)
13. Phenomenally holds back something in a plot? (7)
14. Siberian river connected with farthest Soviet region (6)
15. Heard rattles in stages (6)
16. Fabric style underneath bed (6)
17. Nun is in back, not quite finished (6)
18. Man in tavern set up help for substance abusers (5)
19. Paying passenger about \$100 for a bit of comedy (5)
20. Garland and horseshoe put in juvenile delinquent club (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

constant whitewater

noun, unremitting turmoil in today's corporate life, demanding quick decision-making, great flexibility and creativity, crisis-management skills, and mental and physical stamina: "*Constant whitewater*: Adapted from river rafting, . . . refers to management in an age of mergers, cutbacks and re-engineerings. 'It's as if you're constantly managing amid turbulence,' says management consultant Mitchell Marks. 'Some *whitewater* is fun, but it takes a lot out of you'" (*Wall Street Journal*).

BACKGROUND: Management experts say that an environment of *constant whitewater* arises from strenuous global competition and the culture and consequences of the new corporate raiders. According to the consultant quoted above, managers could benefit from a moment or two of *still water*—in which to reflect on business problems without the pressure of an immediate crisis—but are unlikely to get one anytime soon.

dual-channel person

noun, one who forms opinions and derives entertainment from only two networks, CNN and MTV: "The *dual-channel person* . . . wants a store with a corrugated cardboard business card and a philosophy, preferably an earnest one. . . . The *dual-channel person*

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

cares mostly about clothes with a short life span . . . and music recorded yesterday. . . . He likes nasty black boots, beaded jewelry and boogie boards. And a florist called Weeds" (*New York Times Magazine*).

BACKGROUND: The citation above describes the target clientele of the Lab, an experimental "anti-mall" in Orange County, California, in which the usual trappings of a mall—skylit atrium, food court, greenery, concrete fountain, large chain retailers—have been replaced by such features as an open-air "living room" with thrift-shop furnishings, burnt desert grasses in the parking lot, rotating exhibits of debris, a fountain made of oil drums, and stores on the order of Urban Outfitters and Tower Alternative. Whether the *dual-channel people*, typically aged 18 to 30, for whom the Lab was designed will respond as intended remains to be seen.

glading *noun, slang*, the inhalation of easily obtainable household and industrial products, such as air fresheners, to get high. Also called *bagging* or *huffing*. "*Huffing, glading, bagging.*

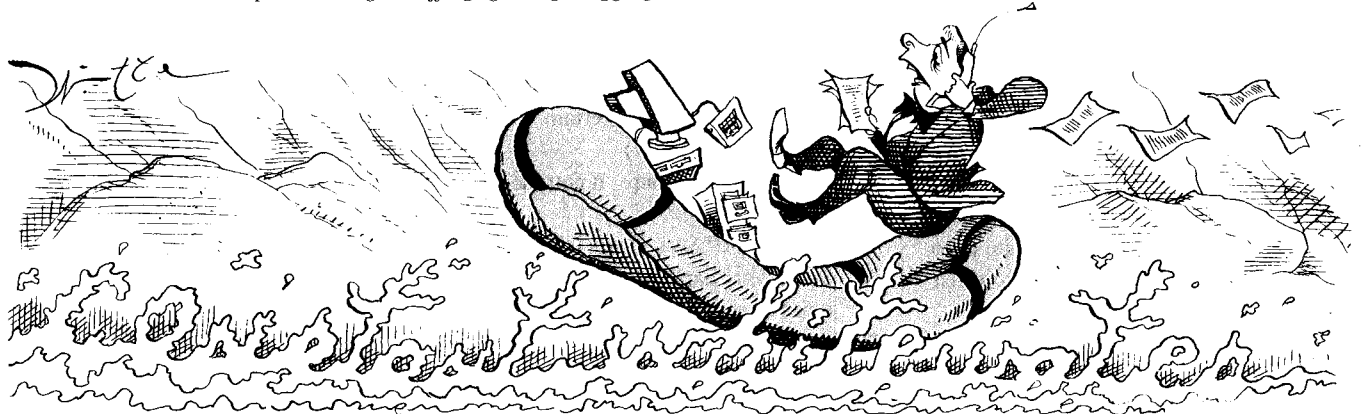
. . . The street names are obscure, but the products aren't. There's . . . *Glade* . . . and . . . about 1,400 other household items. . . . substance-abuse professionals say inhaling household products for a buzz is frighteningly common, especially among younger kids" (*Roanoke, Va., Times & World-News*).

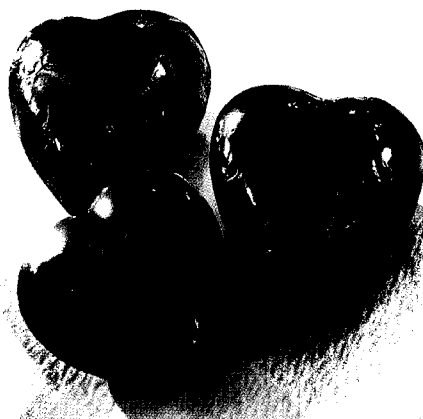
BACKGROUND: The inhalation of cheap, readily obtained substances like gasoline, glue, and the nitrous oxide in whipped-cream dispensers (called *whippets*) is, of course, nothing new. What is new is the early age—sometimes as young as eight—at which children begin availing themselves of these *gateway drugs*, ranging from propane to typewriter correction fluid. Their use often leads to the abuse of other drugs and alcohol later on. Telltale signs of *glading* include a chemical odor on the breath, skin, or clothes, along with mental and behavioral alterations such as euphoria, giggling, hallucinations, and a falling-down-drunk demeanor. The substances inhaled can lead to *sudden sniffing death*, caused by, for instance, respiratory failure or cardiac arrest.

push-polling

noun, a political telemarketing tactic whereby voters are asked general survey questions interspersed with potentially damaging (and not necessarily true) assertions about the sponsoring candidate's or interest group's opponent: "The question, in the midst of a telephone poll, was as shocking as it was designed to be: Would you still favor . . . a . . . candidate for the . . . state assembly, if you knew he voted to give guns back to juveniles who had used them in crimes? . . . It's known as '*push-polling*,' and it has increasingly become a weapon of choice to finish off a nasty election season" (*Wall Street Journal*).

BACKGROUND: *Push-polling* evolved from techniques used by partisan pollsters. It is said to have originated with labor unions, and was deployed in a number of campaigns last fall, especially toward the ends of races, when voters were presumably numb to messages delivered in more-conventional ways. The practice has burgeoned in part because federal law does not require campaigns to identify who is paying for a telephone solicitation (whereas a print or broadcast ad must specify its sponsor). Accordingly, bills that would require *push-pollsters* to identify their sponsors, to file their scripts ahead of time, or both are in the works.



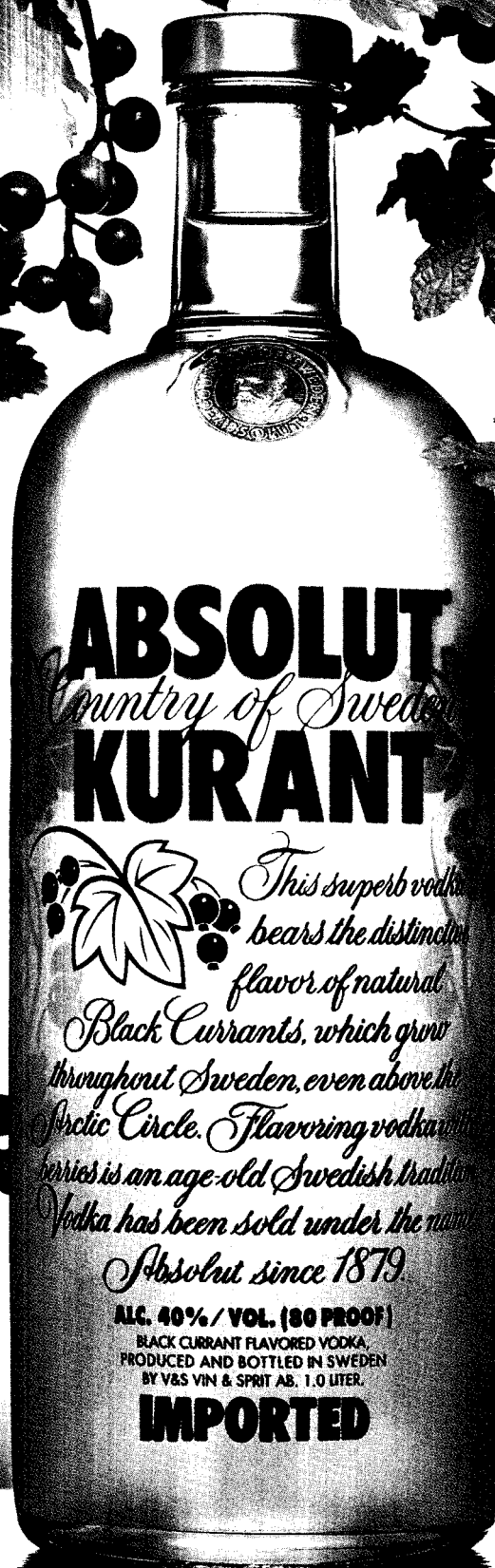


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